

# 2020 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

**Brighton Centre**

**16 Jun 2020 19 Jun 2020**

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### **Organising and Recruitment**

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Organisation and Development

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#### **1. Growing Activism in the Union**

Conference congratulates all activists who have worked hard to ensure that once again ended the previous calendar year in net growth. This is a remarkable achievement given the continuing environment of attacks against workers who deliver public services by increasingly hostile employers as well as large parts of the media who disparage attempts by working people to combine together in trade unions.

Conference fully recognises, however, that recruitment is but one side of the union coin. Organising is also key to the growth of the union. Without strong organisation and visibility of the union these membership gains will be vulnerable to short and medium-term attacks by employers and the Government.

Building strong organisation or, in other words, building more power for our members in the workplace means encouraging more new and existing members to take an active role within the union.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Carry out a full review of all activities across the union designed to identify and develop more activity from members;
- 2) Report back to 2021 National Delegate Conference setting out a three year plan to increase the number of members taking an active role within the union. The plan should include appropriate educational support for existing and future activists as well as agreed regional and service group targets;
- 3) Develop an immediate national campaign to encourage more members to become more active within the union;
- 4) More closely align and monitor organising activities as part of the very successful marketing campaign and recruitment months.

***National Executive Council***

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#### **2. Supporting Activists Wellbeing**

Conference understands the large scale harm to members caused by work related stress, and recognises that mental health issues are reported to affect one in three of us throughout our lifetime.

Conference notes that facility time for UNISON representatives has been under attack for over a decade. As the amount of facility time is reduced so the pressure on

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existing activists and branches increases, particularly within continued austerity agenda funding levels and the post 2019 general election climate.

There are greater pressures on activists across all workplaces through restructuring, redundancy, outsourcing and other efficiency and budget reduction activities. UNISON recognises the impact of all these stresses and more, on all members and provides a branch framework that supports them through the development of workplace contacts, stewards, officers, self-organised groups, education and There for You.

Activists are also subject to the same pressures and stresses as other members but may be at risk of vicarious trauma and associated impacts on wellbeing through the support and representation they provide to their comrades.

Although there is an activist mentor system in many branches, a number still face a growing burden on their personal time to complete support and representation. This has often been a pressing issue for UNISON activists but is of increasing concern within the contemporary socioeconomic and political climate. Conference will also recognise that many activists, performing vital officer roles, do not have any access to facilities time for these functions.

Whilst this motion recognises this is as per current legislation we also ask Conference to note that the pressures on such roles has dramatically increased via the "conscious cruelty" of our current societal landscape.

Bournemouth Christchurch Poole Branch recognises the importance of effective, professional and focused support and has, therefore, funded restorative supervision for key activists to mitigate some of the risks to wellbeing - but it cannot find the funds to broaden this out or provide it in the long term. Other branches may find themselves already unable to meet their current expenses and also pay for this vital service – a need which is created by the hostile environment in which UNISON activists organise.

Conference, therefore, calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Hold an effectively evaluated and published root and branch review, of the current need, provision and quality of appropriate and regular support that seeks to safeguard the wellbeing of all activists;
- 2) Develop, prioritise and publish a plan, that contains actions beyond facilitated debate and training on this topic, to ensure the provision of appropriate and regular support that seeks to safeguard the wellbeing of all activists;
- 3) Consult regional convenors, self-organised groups and service groups in the development of points 1) and 2) above;
- 4) Develop, prioritise and publish a delivery model, that contains actions beyond facilitated debate and training on this topic, for the provision of high quality, appropriate and regular support that seeks to safeguard the mental wellbeing of all activists;

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- 5) Report to National Delegate Conference 2021 on the published review, plan and model and to clearly identify the work undertaken and the outcomes secured as a result.

*Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole*

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### **3. Strategic Organising**

Conference notes that Strategic Organising Units nationally and regionally have helped branches grow their members power to win fights in the workplace. Branches who have benefited from training on Strategic Organising and have seen positive results for their members, for example at George Elliot Hospital. Conference hopes that where required all branches can benefit from sustainable training around Strategic Organising.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with all regions and service groups in the development of a national strategy for Strategic Organising Training. Conference recognises that our activists need to be able access relevant training and also have the tools needed to provide that training to their members. This national strategy should identify training to be applied across all areas of our union (branches, service groups, regional committees/forums and self-organised groups), including:

- 1) Develop a package of training that can be run across the union in Strategic Organising;
- 2) Ensure that the training includes producing training materials for activists to help them build the knowledge and skills needed to use Strategic Organising techniques;
- 3) Additionally, provide training to branches, service groups, regional committees/forums and self-organised groups so that they have the tools needed to train their members in Strategic Organising techniques.

*Staffordshire University*

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Education and Training

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### **4. Combatting the Rise of Discrimination Through Activist Training**

Conference notes with alarm the rise in discrimination in the workplace and in society. The number of reported hate crimes has more than doubled between 2013 and 2019 according to Home Office figures, and a Citizens UK survey suggests that these may represent as little as thirty percent of the true figure. Meanwhile, nearly half of Black employees and two thirds of LGBT+ employees in the UK consider their employer not to be committed to diversity.

Conference notes that our own surveys and evidence from service groups, self-organised groups, branches, and regions, also report a rise in racism and other forms of discrimination in the workplace. Often this discrimination is institutional but more and more it is blatant abuse, coming from service users, colleagues, or members of the public. In these challenging times our members need to be confident that their union will be able to protect and support them, particularly those members

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that work in privatised and fragmented services such as social care, catering and cleaning who tend to be a more vulnerable workforce.

Challenging discrimination and winning equality is at the heart of everything UNISON does. UNISON aspires to work towards a fairer society, beginning with the workplace. Therefore, UNISON has a duty to ensure that our activists are trained and equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise workplace discrimination and the confidence to challenge it.

That duty also extends to ensuring that our member learning programmes do not only offer development opportunities to members but also educate and inform members to engage and participate in UNISON so they too take up the fight against bigotry, prejudice, and discrimination in all its forms.

Many UNISON members find their way into union activism through involvement in one of the self-organised groups or the young members' forum. Conference commends initiatives, such as the North West's Moving On: Life After Young Members, which seek to ensure that these members are equipped and encouraged to become involved in the union beyond those groups.

Conference also believes that UNISON needs to continue to work to ensure that learning and organising is embedded in every workplace. Conference welcomes UNISON's decision to identify schools, early years, and social care as its national organising priorities, recognising that staff in these sectors are more likely to be women, Black, a migrant worker, or on low pay and are often employed under precarious contracts. These are among the groups that are most likely to experience discrimination in the workplace.

UNISON can only combat discrimination in the workplace by being a strong and organised union. To do this we need to grow and support our activist base and encourage all members to engage and participate in the union.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Make appropriate resources available to review and refresh UNISON's member learning and activist equality training courses and materials;
- 2) Require all UNISON representatives (including stewards, health and safety reps, and union learning reps) to attend the appropriate induction training for their role within six months of appointment;
- 3) Make appropriate resources available to create an equality training course for UNISON activists;
- 4) Require all UNISON representatives to attend this equality course within one year of completing their induction training;
- 5) Require those UNISON representatives and branch officers who undertake representation and negotiation to attend the Challenging Racism in the Workplace course and other appropriate equality training, such as UNISON's advanced employment law courses, within three years of appointment;

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- 6) Require regions to align their core training programmes to coincide with branch Annual General Meetings to aid the achievement of points 2), 4) and 5) above and encourage them to monitor training of reps via the Organising Framework assessment;
- 7) Make appropriate resources available to create training materials and resources that support members involved in the self-organised or the young members' groups to engage in wider union activism;
- 8) Make appropriate resources available to work with the regions, to review and refresh the current suite of organising courses that support UNISON campaigns combating discrimination and ensure organising around equality is embedded in these materials.

### ***National Executive Council***

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#### **5. Developing Young Members – Mentoring and Education**

Conference notes the success of the Year of the Young Worker in promoting participation by young members across all parts of the union.

Conference believes that in order to continue recruiting and organising young activists, UNISON must make sure that there is a path for continued development within the union both for young members and for those aged 27 and over.

Conference welcomes initiatives like that of the Northern Region's training programme Moving On: Life After Young Members, which seeks to equip young activists and members with the tools to remain active in the union after they 'age out' of young membership.

Conference also welcomes mentoring initiatives like that of the Black Members' Committee to develop and support activists and to make sure that they receive the support they need to continue lifelong participation in the union.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Make appropriate resources available to create training materials and resources that support young members in developing as activists and engaging in wider union activism;
- 2) Work with Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to promote existing learning resources on activist development, mentoring and buddying;
- 3) Work with the regions, the self-organised group's and the National Young Members Forum to identify and promote best practice in mentoring schemes.

### ***National Young Members' Forum***

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#### **6. Better Training and Support for Branch Activists**

Conference notes that our activists are the backbone of our union. They are in the front line of all our battles with employers, our campaigns and they are the first people members turn to when they have a problem.

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Over the past decade, the role of a UNISON activist has become much harder than it has ever been. We face job losses, service cuts and employers using harsh sickness and disciplinary process to get rid of workers cheaply.

It now more important than ever that we ensure all our activists continue to receive good quality training delivered at a time and in a way that meets their requirements.

Conference therefore requests the National Executive Council:

- 1) Investigates and develops online training resources;
- 2) Confirms that although online training provision will be developed, there will still be a commitment to face-to-face training;
- 3) Commits to defending the collective learning experience of continuing to support and promote cross union training through the TUC;
- 4) Works with regions to ensure they provide adequate support to activists if sufficient support is not available in branches;
- 5) Works wherever possible with Self Organised Groups to ensure all activists' needs are full understood and supported;
- 6) Produce an update on progress made against Motion 4, as carried at the 2016 National Delegate Conference.

***Worcestershire***

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### **7. Encouraging Members to Become Activists**

Conference notes the general decline in members wishing to take a more active role in UNISON.

For branches to recruit members into activist roles we must increase members understanding of these roles.

It is therefore important that current activists encourage fellow members to become our next generation of activists and help UNISON to grow stronger year by year.

Some members may feel that they could take the next step towards becoming an activist but may not be confident enough to do this because they are not sure what these roles entail.

Members tend to become more involved with their local branch when they have had cause to call on UNISON for help.

But what about the members out there who never need UNISON's help, the members who may have skills to help a branch grow or maybe not even realise yet that they have these skills?

How many of our low paid members feel that they are just a cleaner, caterer, librarian or clerical worker and do not realise that they may have so many other skills to bring to their branch and may be our next generation of activists?

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Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) To develop courses that give members an insight into what being an activist involves;
- 2) To help members understand that being an activist is not just about possible industrial action, it is about support in the workplace, health and safety, mental health and so much more;
- 3) To provide the materials to help, and to encourage, branches to organise open days that give members a chance to see all the courses and online training that is available to activists and hopefully encourage them to take the next step to becoming more active in their branch.

*City of Wolverhampton*

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### Negotiating and Bargaining

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#### Bargaining

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#### **8. Insecure Work and Digitalisation in the Workplace**

Conference notes that widespread insecure work practices continue to grow unchallenged, with little decisive action by the UK government to restrict them. Technological advances in information technology (IT), known as digitalisation, are accelerating these problems.

The TUC reported in July 2019 that there are now 3.7 million people in insecure work in the UK. The largest cause of insecure and precarious work has been due to the fragmentation of the workforce and growth in the number of low-paid, self-employed, agency, casual and seasonal workers or those on zero-hours contracts.

Conference also notes that precarious and insecure work in public services is also widespread in sectors such as social care but also cleaning, catering, security, leisure and waste management. Conference records that UNISON continues to campaign for these members to benefit from the protection of our union and collective agreements.

Precarious practices and insecure work in social care has led to an endemic non-payment of the National Minimum Wage, zero hours contracts proliferating, a lack of training opportunities and poor health and safety for lone workers. Conference notes the success of UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and Care Workers for Change campaigns to force employers to provide better terms and conditions to care workers.

However, Conference notes that workers with zero-hours contracts are increasingly punished for late notification of not being able to do a shift – even when circumstances meant that they could not have given earlier warning. These practices have a profound effect on the workers involved who often have no idea what hours they are going to work or how they will pay their bills. Conference fears these practises could continue to spread and flexibility is one sided in favour of the employer.

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Conference believes that the rise of digitisation, the use of platforms and workplace apps in the workplace, must not be used to increase precarious work practices.

Conference notes the worldwide concerns raised on the rise of digitalisation in the recent Public Services International (PSI) report, with the replacement of human work by digital processes and devices, robots, new forms of performance and behaviour control at the workplace, with surveillance and monitoring of the workforce growing unchecked, as well as with the unregulated collection and use of personal data. UNISON members who work in call centres experience these trends directly.

The rise of on-line auctions for the contracting of public service work is enabling the spread of atypical and precarious conditions. This has significant impacts and implications for union rights and collective bargaining, social cohesion, gender equality and human rights. Job losses will not only increase in public services but alongside changes in existing job roles most but not all research shows digitalisation brings about the lowering of workplace terms and conditions.

In the UK, research shows that 'that twice as many women as men work are in jobs with a high potential for automation (nine per cent compared to four per cent of men). Migrants and lone parents (typically women) are more likely to hold jobs with high automation potential.

Digital transformations in public services are heavily pushed by global digital corporations (such as Google, Apple, Microsoft, IBM), together with global consultancy service corporations and investment banks/funds that see digitalisation in public services as a lucrative opportunity.

Conference notes that digitalisation is not inherently bad and can help workers and improve service delivery. Online access and applications can help staff make appointments and share information with colleagues, service users and the public. The use of new technology is improving the diagnosis of diseases such as cancer and enabling staff to work remotely where appropriate. However, digitalisation has also been used to increase workplace monitoring and surveillance, make job cuts and office/site closures.

There is currently very little regulation around digitalisation in the workplace and a limited national or local social partnership approach in the planning of introducing digitisation into workplace. Conference agrees that UNISON's "Guidance on monitoring and surveillance in the workplace" and "Bargaining over automation" guides will become increasingly important tools for our activists to engage with employers on the impact of digitalisation to give a worker voice on these changes and, for example, to secure a shorter working week with no loss of pay.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to campaign:

- 1) Against zero hours contracts and for predictable shift patterns;
- 2) For workers to get proper and clear pay slips;
- 3) For greater National Minimum Wage penalties, enforcement and the closing of loopholes;

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- 4) With Labour Link, Campaign Fund, MP's, EPSU and wider alliances to keep UK workplace rights, combating insecure practices, at a level playing field with the EU or better;
- 5) For improved UK digitalisation regulations, negotiations and rights in the workplace such as the right to disconnect, a digital social partnership approach, a right to know about surveillance and a 'just transition' to protect jobs at risk of replacement by digitalisation and AI;
- 6) Against any government attempts to undermine workers protections in the EU derived General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – which allows workers to see what data employers and others hold on them and give consent to use that data;
- 7) In e-commerce chapters of future post EU exit trade deals to keep data localisation protections so that the free flow of NHS data in any UK-US deal can be prevented;
- 8) To keep public ownership of public data so that the value of the data is publicly owned not privately owned or traded;
- 9) For a more transparent uses of artificial intelligence related applications in any future trade deals and enforcing existing UK laws so that public data and its public value can best be protected from corporate capture and transferred around the world.

***National Executive Council***

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### **9. Developing and Expanding Social Partnership and Fair Work in Wales and across the UK**

UNISON Cymru/Wales supports the principle of a "Fair Work Nation". As the largest Trade Union in Wales, we speak on behalf of around 100,000 members and their families and work with 49 affiliated unions through the Wales TUC.

We strongly support the Welsh government's Social Partnership Bill, currently progressing through the Senedd, which aims to strengthen social partnership arrangements by putting them on a statutory footing. Wales faces severe long term economic and public service challenges which have been significantly worsened by the UK government's austerity agenda. Despite unemployment levels in Wales falling back to pre-financial crisis levels of below five percent there has been no corresponding rise in pay. Instead there has been a decline in real terms pay since 2008. In many low-paid sectors casualised employment, low hours and zero hours contracts have become the norm.

In this context, UNISON Cymru/Wales supports the Welsh government's strengthening of social dialogue and social partnership as an essential democratic and constitutional function. By underpinning, enhancing and consolidating our social partnership the Welsh Government is setting an example for the whole of the UK on how to deliver a more equal society.

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Partnership is crucial to maintaining and building employment in Wales and the UK as a whole.

A Welsh government committed to making Wales a Fair Work Nation must take responsibility for ensuring that every policy, financial and legislative lever at its disposal are fully utilised in enforcing the delivery of Fair Work outcomes and that it provides suitable resource to that delivery.

There needs to be a fundamental shift in the perception and treatment of workers' rights, the democratic representative role of unions and the legitimacy of tripartite social partnership. The proposed social partnership legislation is an opportunity to ensure that, wherever decisions are made about working people's lives, that their democratic trade unions are active participants.

The definition of Welsh social partnership is that it is:

- 1) Tripartite: Consisting of government, trade unions and public/private sector employers;
- 2) Representative: Involving organisations providing the collective voice of workers and employers;
- 3) Accountable: Able to speak on behalf of their sectors/members by being fully accountable to them.

On the basis that the Welsh government's proposals meet that definition, UNISON fully supports this initiative which includes the creation of a new Social Partnership Council.

Social Partnership Council's role should be to:

- a) Reach agreements on workforce issues within the devolved public sector for the purpose of improving public services.
- b) Reach agreements on what is expected of organisations and businesses receiving public support in so far as workforce issues are concerned;
- c) Consider generally how social partnership and Fair Work can improve efficiency and effectiveness so as to achieve a prosperous Wales and improve people's well-being;
- d) Consider how government policy, expenditure and legislation can best contribute to a prosperous Wales and improve people's well-being.

UNISON is calling for a clear statement of intent saying "The expected outcomes of a Social Partnership approach are to prioritise delivery of long term social and economic equality for Wales; and, through grants and procurement processes we will:

- i) Significantly increase collective bargaining coverage;
- ii) Increase trade union access to and presence in workplaces.

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Which will:

- A) Address in-work poverty;
- B) Reduce gender pay gap across all sectors;
- C) Ensure ethical standards of employment across all sectors.

In the light of the above developments Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- I) Work with the Cymru/Wales region to review the additional resources which will be required to positively engage with the developing Welsh government social partnership and fair work agenda;
- II) Review the potential of the Welsh Social Partnership Bill and the Fair Work programme in Wales and how this could be developed across the nations and regions of the UK;
- III) Share information on the development the Social Partnership Bill and Wales Fair Work Programme with all UNISON nations and regions;
- IV) To work with the Labour Link committee in developing and advancing these strategies.

### *Cymru/Wales Region*

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#### **10. Engaging with Alternative Private Company Business Models**

Conference notes the difficulties our union experiences in developing private company bargaining and organising strategies. Forty years of neoliberalism, de-regulation of labour markets, and the loss in many instances of collective identities in groups of workers explain in part why the private sector is so difficult to bargain and organise in.

And yet it is such workers in the private sector who are most in need of the benefit active trade unionism would bring to their terms, conditions, and working environments.

Conference also notes the developing picture in the North West centred on Preston, commonly known as the Preston Model, that seeks amongst other aims to develop alternative business models that place workplace decision making directly in the hands of workers. The Preston Model experience has been noted elsewhere and there are similar initiatives underway in places as diverse as Manchester and Plymouth taking Preston as inspiration in part.

The Preston Model is influenced and inspired by efforts in the United States initially centred on Cincinnati and Ohio, but spreading across the States, that seeks to democratise and localise economic spending by large anchor institutions such as local authorities, hospitals and universities. Crucially, trade unions are regarded by the Preston Model and its American counterparts as being integral to the development of such models.

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Fundamental to this, in the States, is the example of our counterparts such as our sister union the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) being involved in the development of a new form of private sector business called the Union Co-op model. The model is based on a worker co-operative and guarantees trade union recognition, bargaining and organising as an integral element of representing the workers interests as workers, while other structures represent their interests as owners of the business. Furthermore, the model actively promotes trade union membership within the workforce. To put it simply, trade union involvement and a high level of membership is baked into the business model. As such the model represents a win win situation for trade unions.

Conference believes that with the prospect of another five years of business-friendly Tory government ahead of us, that it is imperative that alternative business models in the private sector are encouraged so that they may challenge the consensus that only the interests of private capital should dictate how private businesses operate within the market.

Conference believes that our members have the ideas, skills and drive collectively to make alternative private business ownership models work, and that UNISON should have a role in enabling this where practical. In doing so UNISON would benefit from day one recognition, and UNISON members would benefit from the influence the union would apply in representing our members interests.

Conference requests that the National Executive Council ensures that UNISON actively explores efforts to establish alternative private company business models such as those being developed under the Preston Model, with a particular emphasis on efforts to promote awareness of, and engagement with, Union Co-ops in the UK.

### ***Leicestershire County***

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#### **11. The Young Workers Charter – Making Sure UNISON is Relevant for Young Workers**

Conference notes the success of the Year of the Young Worker across all parts of the union in recruiting and retaining young members. We believe that the union must build on this success to ensure a sustainable future for the union.

Conference believes that in order to continue to recruit and organise young members, UNISON must demonstrate that young workers' priorities are key to the union's bargaining aims.

Conference welcomes the launch in November 2019 of UNISON's Young Workers Charter, which sets out five priorities for young workers in UNISON, as identified by young members themselves. These are: real Living Wage, fair employment, equality, training and development, and quality apprenticeships.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Promote the Young Workers' Charter as widely as possible across the union;
- 2) Support and encourage regions and branches in getting employers to sign up to the UNISON Young Workers Charter;

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- 3) Work with the National Young Members Forum to promote UNISON membership among young workers in public services.

### *National Young Members' Forum*

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#### **12. Facilities and Expectations for Workplace Representatives**

Conference notes that accredited, recognised and trained trade union representatives are legally entitled to time off for the following duties:

- 1) Negotiating with employers;
- 2) Representing members individually and collectively;
- 3) Performing health and safety functions;
- 4) Performing union learning functions;
- 5) Attending union training courses.

Further to this, we believe that any employer who is genuinely committed to a constructive relationship with its recognised trade unions, should guarantee facilities time for the following activities:

- a) Attending internal union meetings;
- b) Attending union policy making meetings and conferences;
- c) Organising activities and union elections;
- d) Meeting with union officers;
- e) Accessing services of union learning representatives.

Many employers have taken advantage of increased government hostility towards trade unions to clamp down on trade union facilities time.

Even those who are not as openly hostile to trade unions have used austerity and job losses as a pretext for either formally reducing facilities time or simply making it more difficult for representatives to access facilities time.

This motion seeks to highlight one particularly damaging effect of this erosion of facilities time.

As stated earlier in the motion, recognised trade union representatives are legally entitled to time off to represent members, not only individually, but also collectively.

Conference believes that collective representation is the most effective form of representation.

In order to effectively represent the collective views of members, trade union representatives must be given the opportunity to gather those views. It is necessary

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therefore that representatives are provided with opportunities, within work time, to discuss with members in a collective setting.

In our experience, team meetings, where representatives are given the opportunity to spend time with members, once management and non-members have left the room, have been a casualty of austerity.

Conference therefore reaffirms the importance of allowing trade union representatives to carry out their legal right to represent members' collective interests; and to do so, by meeting with members to discover their collective views.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with the Service Groups to provide further guidance to branches on effective ways to engage in collective representation, as part of UNISON's Organising agenda.

We further call upon the National Executive Council to support branches to defend and where necessary, expand the right to the facilities required for collective representation.

*Salford City*

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### **13. Domestic Abuse is a Workplace Issue**

Conference notes that the impact of domestic abuse is far ranging and that it can affect workers, colleagues, families and friends.

It is important that domestic abuse isn't ignored or misunderstood within the workplace. Conference welcomes the fact that UNISON recognises that domestic abuse is a trade union issue; has developed information and guidance and has worked with women's committee to ensure domestic abuse is understood as a serious, recognisable and preventable issue.

However, Conference is concerned that not enough is being done to make the link between women presenting with mental illness and domestic abuse. The evidence is that women are more likely than men to have a common mental health problem and are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders. Research shows that women experiencing domestic abuse are more likely to experience poor or chronic mental health. Conversely, women who are mentally frail may also be abused.

Mental health care provided to women suffering from depression, anxiety, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and substance abuse is estimated to cost £176 million according to the Office of National Statistics. Conference believes that domestic abuse may be a root cause of a significant proportion of this mental illness and represent a significant cost – yet this remains hidden.

Young women are now most at risk from poor mental health according to a report in May 2019. While stereotyping, sexualisation, and objectification is an issue for all women, it is particularly for young women given a culture of increasingly normalising violence against women and girls.

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Conference also notes that women who identify within the LGBT+ group have been reporting increasing domestic abuse. The Scottish Transgender Alliance indicates domestic abuse sits at a shocking 80 percent.

Conference agrees with Dr Beena Rajkumar of the Royal College of Psychiatry in the Safelives publication - Safe and Well, May 2019 edition where she states that despite the fact mental health issues are more common in cases of domestic abuse, perpetrators continue to be missed (when women present to mental health services.)

Conference notes further that In June 2019, a study carried out at Birmingham University and published in the British Journal of Psychiatry showed that health professionals were failing to detect abuse and support vulnerable women thus highlighting that more needs to be done to train health practitioners who come into contact with women in both primary or secondary care to spot the signs of domestic abuse and to ask the right questions.

Conference agrees that training is key to how you ask about domestic abuse, how to respond safely and how best to sign post support and that this is as true in the workplace when managers are responding to staff showing mental distress, as it is in a clinical setting.

Conference believes that it is important that we work together with women's organisations to break the taboo around abuse and particularly, the impact on mental health so that women feel able to speak freely and place trust in mental health services. Highlighting the importance of training about the impact of domestic abuse is key in a work setting is key.

Conference notes the experience of one of UNISON's Health branches, which arranged training for its stewards delivered by the Police and Crime Commissioner's team so that reps could identify where domestic abuse is a factor, for example, in sickness and performance meetings.

Conference asks the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with the National Women's committee to review UNISON's guidance – Domestic violence and abuse: a trade union issue – and ensure it emphasises the importance of training for health professionals and line managers to enable them to identify possible domestic abuse when women present with mental illness;
- 2) Re-launch the revised guidance to raise awareness that domestic abuse can be a factor in mental illness and performance/sickness situations, including social media activity, a blog and web-materials;
- 3) Encourage negotiation of domestic violence/abuse policies in their workplace and that an awareness of the impact of domestic violence is worked into HR policies, such as capability/performance management, absence policies, and special/compassionate leave policies;
- 4) Liaise with Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to develop training for reps covering the possible impact of domestic violence in the workplace, including how

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to seek support for themselves when dealing with a member who is experiencing domestic abuse, as well as supporting the member;

- 5) Work with Labour Link and the government to raise awareness and lobby for nationally provided training for mental health services to help early recognition of possible domestic abuse so perpetrators are identified sooner and possible tragic consequences prevented;
- 6) Lobby and campaign nationally together with women's organisations, charities and non-governmental organisations to highlight how domestic abuse can be a factor in mental ill-health and for recognition of this in the workplace.

*National Women's Committee*

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### **14. Paid Leave for Victims of Domestic Abuse**

Conference notes that victims of domestic abuse can be faced with a range of practical concerns from the need for medical, legal or financial advice, to arranging child care or alternative accommodation. Conference recognises that currently victims of domestic abuse may manage their situation by taking annual leave or sickness absence and they would benefit from increased support in the workplace.

Conference recognises that paid leave is an essential part of supporting affected employees and offering reassurance they will not lose out financially whilst they navigate these difficult circumstances. Specific paid leave would assist victims of domestic abuse to leave their abusers, find new homes and help protect themselves and any dependent children. This leave could be used as and when required to suit the individual employees' requirements.

Some public bodies already offer paid leave for their employees but provision should not be a postcode lottery for survivors of domestic abuse but a statutory entitlement.

The comprehensive definition of domestic abuse below should be used when considering requests for paid leave for victims of domestic abuse:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional."

Conference recognises how difficult it is for victims of domestic abuse to report incidents of abuse and so leave should be based on disclosure by employees and employers should avoid requesting supporting evidence from GP's or the Police. Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign to require employers to provide up to 10 days paid leave for victims of domestic abuse separate from their annual leave entitlement;
- 2) Work with Labour Link and self-organised groups to maximise the effectiveness of campaigning around this issue;

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- 3) Endeavour to further develop relationships with external domestic abuse organisations in the campaign and promote the range of ways that UNISON supports its members.

*UNISON Essex*

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### **15. Infant Death and Child Loss affects Fathers Too**

In the UK every day, fifteen babies die before, during or soon after birth.

Conference appreciates the pain and heartbreak that losing a child has on a parent. Nothing can prepare a person to go through such a traumatic experience.

However, although both parents are affected by the loss of a child through miscarriage, still birth or infant loss, women are much more likely to get help. Research shows that men will seek advice if their partner encourages them to, but all too often a grieving mother will understandably be in no position to fully help and support their partner.

Both parents have felt excitement and looked forward to their birth of their new baby. The congratulations they receive will be equal. Yet when the worst happens, fathers are often forgotten as the focus turns to the grieving mother.

Conference understands and supports grieving mothers getting all the help and support they need to come to terms with their loss. But we must also look to grieving fathers and ensure they know that their feelings are just as important, just as valid, and that they too are equally entitled to help and support.

Behind closed doors, it is likely that both parents will grieve together. But sadly, out in public, the father, the second half of the parenting couple can be forgotten about and almost seen as if they aren't part of what is happening. The effect that miscarriage and infant loss can have on the father is often underestimated. Most, if not all the focus is put on the mother, how she is feeling. Both physically and emotionally. The father is often ignored and left sitting in the background. The father has lost his baby too. His hopes and his dreams for the future may be just as shattered as that of the mother.

Many workplaces have policies and procedures to properly support female members of staff should they go through the trauma of being a grieving mother. UNISON has written and championed many of these policies. As a trade union we must start doing more to help fathers and ensure they have equal help and support.

If a baby is stillborn after twenty four weeks pregnancy or is born alive at any time but dies shortly after birth, parents are entitled to maternity, paternity and shared parental leave, as well as full parental rights and benefits. However, many fathers simply aren't aware of the entitlements and support available to them. And unfortunately, fathers cannot rely on their employer to tell them about help available to them. A survey of more than 2,500 bereaved parents found that most employers did not offer any support. One father said he was sacked after taking seven days off when his baby died. Responses to the survey also found that only one in five parents had been offered or given any support by their employer on their return to work and around half said employers did not discuss entitlements to pay and leave following

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the death of their baby. Two out of five parents said they were not offered any additional time away from work.

For any grieving parent, mother or father, returning to work may be a difficult step but the workplace can be a vital source of support.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for equal paid leave for fathers who suffer the loss of a baby;
- 2) Collect examples of best practice on how employers can support fathers who have suffered the loss of a baby.

*Cardiff University*

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### **16. Not all Disabilities are Visible**

Conference understands that there are hundreds of thousands of disabled people living and working in the UK today. However, only a relatively small number of these people are living with 'visible' impairments (such as wheelchair users and people with guide dogs). The majority of disabled people have 'hidden' or "invisible" impairments that are not immediately obvious to someone who doesn't know their circumstances.

Conference notes that public awareness of disability issues is often influenced by stereotypes in the media and understanding of who is legally defined as disabled therefore remains limited. The belief that 'real' disability can be seen is persistent and often leads to an assumption that anyone who is not visibly impaired is 'not really disabled'. This can create difficulties for disabled people in the workplace. It is here where such attitudes can be used as an excuse for refusing to provide 'reasonable adjustments' and can lead to disbelief, a lack of support and even hostility from other co-workers and managers.

A recent Wales TUC survey of over a thousand people discovered that:

- 1) Over a quarter (twenty-eight percent) of disabled respondents said they felt that their employer views disability as a "problem" in the workplace and one in three (thirty-three per cent) said they felt their colleagues view disability as a 'problem' in the workplace;
- 2) Over three-quarters of all respondents said that their workplace had policies in place to help disabled workers but a significant number reported that these did not work in practice due to poor, non-existent or inconsistent implementation;
- 3) Two thirds (67 percent) of disabled respondents said they felt there was more stigma associated with disabilities that others cannot see.

Everywhere from car parks to public transport to the workplace, disabled people whose impairments are not visible to others are often challenged with the words "you don't look disabled" (for example, for using a disabled parking space or toilet). And in the workplace, people with 'hidden' impairments report that such comments are often used to show disbelief or challenge their right to reasonable adjustments. Sometimes

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managers use such comments as an excuse for refusing to offer support. In addition, colleagues may imply that the person is somehow seeking to gain unfair advantage.

It is extremely stressful for workers with hidden impairments to have to manage their condition without adjustments or support and carry out their job in the face of hostility from managers and colleagues.

When workers with hidden impairments do disclose to their employer, this is often not a one-off process, and that they are then expected to 'prove' they are disabled repeatedly, in what can sometimes be an extremely intrusive process, particularly when new managers are involved. This will inevitably deter many people with 'hidden' impairments from disclosing their condition to their employer and seeking adjustments.

Due to lack of awareness, many disabled people may themselves be unaware that an impairment they have meets the legal definition of a disability and that they are therefore entitled to protection from discrimination and to reasonable adjustments

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Develop a toolkit for union reps that specifically deals with "invisible" disabilities;
- b) Seek out good practice of workplace policies that also include and make reference to "invisible" disabilities and encourage branches to work with their employers on similar policies and procedures;
- c) To develop a coaching and mentoring toolkit for branch activists and regional staff to help them identify "invisible" disabilities.

*Cardiff University*

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### **17. Hidden Disability - The Effect of Autoimmune Conditions**

Autoimmune conditions are where the body turns inwards and fails to tolerate its own cells. Your immune system mistakenly attacks your body.

Some examples of autoimmune conditions and hidden disabilities include:

- 1) Thyroid disease;
- 2) Asthma;
- 3) Osteoporosis;
- 4) Diabetes;
- 5) Coeliac disease;
- 6) Lupus;
- 7) Multiple sclerosis;
- 8) Mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder;

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- 9) Psoriasis;
- 10) Ulcerative colitis;
- 11) Autoimmune alopecia.

These conditions can cause many symptoms, including fatigue, muscle pain, memory problems, numbness, dry eyes, rashes, achy joints, stomach problems. Symptoms can be hidden or invisible, can wax and wane but can also be difficult and chronic and can detrimentally affect your work and day-to-day life. Autoimmune conditions don't disappear and once you develop one, you are also more susceptible to develop others.

Women are more likely than men to be affected by auto-immune conditions. While eight percent of the population have autoimmune conditions, 78 percent of individuals with autoimmune diseases are women.

Needing to deal with autoimmune conditions and hidden disabilities in the workplace can be difficult if the conditions are not supported or acknowledged, however, even members of the medical profession often do not recognise and support these conditions.

Work-related activities that can be affected by autoimmune conditions include interacting with colleagues, following instructions, using a computer, driving, carrying out interviews, preparing written documents and keeping to a timetable or a shift pattern – all normal daily activities.

The definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. Unfortunately, there is some variability in how employers have interpreted the Equality Act and many do not recognise autoimmune conditions and hidden disabilities as disabilities. These employers do not make adjustments for autoimmune conditions, like diabetes, regardless of whether or not the condition is insulin or diet controlled.

Absences caused by these conditions are often recorded as sickness absence rather than disability related absence which can lead to capability and disciplinary proceedings.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with the relevant national committees and service groups to:

- a) Develop guidance for branches on the impact of autoimmune conditions on workers and how best to support them and negotiate for better workplace policies and recognition of hidden disabilities;
- b) Raise awareness of existing UNISON resources including bargaining guides and model policies on disability leave and reasonable adjustments;
- c) Campaign for greater recognition and public understanding of hidden disabilities such as autoimmune conditions;

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- d) Develop a leaflet to raise awareness amongst UNISON branches and membership so that they can be better informed and equipped to challenge inconsistent or unfair practices in their workplaces with regards to sickness absence policies.

*Milton Keynes Area*

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Pay

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### **18. Pay Up Now - Time to Reverse a Decade of Damage**

Conference recognises that the recent upturn in public sector pay settlements has called time on Tory pay freezes. However, a decade of damage inflicted on public service workers and their standards of living continues to take its toll.

While the scale of these losses has varied within different sectors and across the devolved nations, the contrast with the income of the wealthy across the UK has been clear. The pay of chief executives for the UK's largest companies grew at around double the rate of public sector wages, company profits grew at more than four times the rate to reach £450 billion and dividends paid to shareholders grew at more than ten times the rate to a record £100 billion. There is strong case for a binding fixed pay ratio, for example 20 to 1, between Chief Executive and lowest paid, but in way that does not encourage outsourcing of low paid jobs. Workplaces with unions present have lower inequality between top and bottom.

With our service groups working to re-coup past losses at a sectoral level, conference notes that it was UNISON's campaigns which overturned the cruel and unnecessary pay freeze. In a hugely hostile environment, our union has negotiated progressive collective agreements on pay in many sectors, prioritising positive action to address low pay. 140,000 fewer people received sub-Living Wage rates over the last two years, with the improvements at the bottom of the pay scales for large public sector bargaining groups a key factor.

However, with their continued refusal to level the pay playing field, the UK government continues to push indirectly employed staff outside the scope of these collective agreements. Inevitably, this means that the hardship of in-work poverty in the public sector is ever more concentrated within groups that have been transferred out and are managed by private and community sector contractors. UNISON members across the UK have taken action to challenge this shoddy treatment. These campaigns have been great – and significant victories have been achieved – but it shouldn't have to be this way!

The UK economic climate going forward looks set to deliver slow growth in the real Living Wage rate and their annual increases set by the Living Wage Foundation. The six percent rise in April 2020 in the statutory National Minimum Wage rates is welcome but they still fall short of rates that workers can live off and many require, not out of choice, in-work state benefits such as Tax Credits and Universal Credit, both of which have been cut in recent years. Employers cannot be allowed to achieve living wage accreditation whilst removing allowances.

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Government plans to abandon the Retail Prices Index as a measure will hide the true costs that workers will face over coming years and could potentially take thousands off the value of public sector pay and pensions for individual members.

Public sector workers deserve the £10 per hour minimum now and UNISON should review this and develop more ambitious targets for the future. UNISON members deserve to get the benefits of pay agreements for their sector whether they are directly employed or contracted out. Annual cost of living rises for pay and pensions should be linked to the best measures of the costs they face too.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Use UNISON's "Pay Up Now" campaign to press for public sector pay policy that restores the real value of wages lost over the last decade;
- 2) Campaign for public sector pay policy that aligns the minimum wage with Living Wage rates and embeds our £10 an hour target across the public sector in 2021;
- 3) Review the evidence with service groups and to set a new target beyond £10 an hour;
- 4) Campaign for pay policy that ensures that the benefits of collective public-sector agreements are passed on to the indirectly employed staff in that sector;
- 5) Campaign for increased funding from central government that enables public authorities to deliver real terms pay rises for both their directly employed and contractor workforce;
- 6) Campaign for published measures of inflation which accurately reflect the costs that public service workers face;
- 7) Work with all parts of the union to coordinate pay campaigning and industrial action internally and with other unions through the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU externally as appropriate.

***National Executive Council***

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### **19. It's Taking Too Long to Close the Gender Pay Gap – We Can't Afford to Wait!**

2020 is the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of The Equal Pay Act.

Conference celebrates the successes of UNISON in using the legislation to achieve equal pay for large numbers of its low paid women members, in particular, women working in local government.

However, Conference notes that notwithstanding successes in achieving equal pay for work of equal value in a large part of the public sector, in 2019 - all sectors continued to pay men more on average than women.

Fifty years since the introduction of the Equal Pay Act in the UK, the Office for National Statistics recorded a gender pay gap of 17.3 percent, one of the highest in Europe. The gap is largest for women in their 50's and 60's – 28 percent.

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In 2019, the government achieved 100 percent compliance with gender pay gap reporting requirements. However, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission is required only to check that employers publish their figures, not check the accuracy of data or progress achieved. Men will still be paid more than women 100 years from now unless employers also incur sanctions if they fail to take action to close gender pay gaps.

Conference notes that the pay gap does not just impact on earnings it cuts across all aspects of women's lives. Women's earnings make a huge contribution to their families' standard of living. The gap also represents a loss in income for women that could be spent at local level. It is also money lost to the public purse through our taxation system.

Society's expectations are a factor – women are still the prime carer and are frequently are over-qualified for the jobs they are doing. Maternity and caring responsibilities also impact on promotion and career opportunities. Pay inequality in women's working lives leads to continuing inequality in retirement and in pensions.

Conference congratulates the National Women's Committee on the #bridgethegap campaign and gender pay gap bargaining tools launched in April 2019. We welcome UNISON's trailblazer project branches (and employers) who will work with UNISON using our bargaining guidance to develop action plans to close the gap and share their learning to improve UNISON's overall approach.

However, we need louder, clearer leadership on the gender pay gap and targets. We need more visible female role models. We also need a range of internal policies and programmes – for example, on flexible working and changes to recruitment practice. We need to see employers taking positive steps to encourage women to apply for traditionally male roles and to support their career development.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Call for the government to make reporting gender pay action plans mandatory;
- 2) Reinvigorate UNISON's campaign #bridge the gap to raise awareness among members of the gender pay gap and its long-lasting impact on low pay and subsequent pension poverty for many of our women members;
- 3) Work with our service sectors to develop strategies and negotiating priorities to redress pay inequality including ensuring that all pay claims must seek to level women's pay up and that employers' offers must be subjected to a gender equality impact assessment by the relevant regional or national Service Group;
- 4) Work with our Labour Link to develop Labour Party policy to eliminate gender pay discrimination;
- 5) Work with the National Women's Committee and Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to develop new training materials for branches and regions on equal pay and the gender pay gap.

***National Women's Committee***

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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### **20. For United Action on Public Sector Pay**

Conference believes that the election of a Tory government with a large majority inevitably means:

- 1) There will be a hostile response to our future pay claims across the public sector;
- 2) There will be continued attacks on our pensions, pay, terms and conditions;
- 3) There will be an increase in outsourcing and privatisation of our jobs and services.

We do accept that the re-election of the Tory government means another five years of pay restraint and austerity. We believe, as was the case during the pensions dispute in 2011, the union is at its strongest when members across the sectors are united in a common cause.

We therefore resolve to go on the offensive against low pay within the public sector.

We call on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Coordinate, alongside the Service Group Executives, common pay claims that reverse the cuts in real pay and conditions imposed on our members during the years of pay restraint and austerity;
- b) Work towards a union wide legal industrial action strategy involving all members covered, or working within sectors covered by national agreements;
- c) Seek agreement with the other TUC affiliated public sector trade unions for a coordinated national pay campaign up to and including legal industrial action.

***Mid Yorkshire Health***

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### **21. Campaigning to End the Disability Pay Gap**

Conference is concerned that while, according to the TUC, the disability pay gap stands at 15.5 percent and is increasing, the government have still not implemented the mandatory monitoring and reporting called for by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in their report 'Fair opportunities for all: A strategy to reduce pay gaps in Britain.'

Research for EHRC found that while the disability pay gap is the highest since records began, the level varies depending on the impairment and the barriers faced. For example, the gap between a physically disabled woman and a non-disabled woman is 18 percent but for a man with learning difficulties the gap increases to 60 percent.

Part-time working is a key driver of the disability pay gap, with disabled workers more likely to be in part-time employment which is predominantly available in lower skilled and/or lower paid jobs. The report found that discrimination and bias were also key factors in the disability pay gap, as was the failure to make reasonable adjustments.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

UNISON's own recent report 'Let's be Reasonable', based on a survey of 3,000 disabled workers, found that over two thirds of those who requested reasonable adjustments were turned down or faced employers who just never responded to them. As a result, many of our disabled members end up being hounded out of their jobs on capability grounds, often due to sickness absence that could have been avoided with the right adjustments. Lack of reasonable adjustments is a key reason for the pay gap, with disabled members unable to progress their career internally alongside their colleagues and instead forced to move to lower paid jobs in other organisations or reduce their hours.

Over 75 percent of employers say equality and diversity is a priority for their organisation but less than three percent measure the disability pay gap. And there are few consequences for an employer when a disabled person is disadvantaged in the recruitment process, overlooked for promotion or refused training.

Disabled people are also likely to have fewer educational qualifications. Nearly 20 percent of disabled people have no formal qualifications compared to just six percent of non-disabled people. Only 14 percent hold a degree level qualification compared to 28 percent of non-disabled people. However, even where a disabled person overcomes the societal barriers to gain higher qualifications, they are still paid less than equally qualified non-disabled people.

The EHRC report also found that while the reasons for the disability pay gap were complex the pay gap alone didn't fully reflect the income difference between disabled and non-disabled people as disabled people are more likely to be part-time workers or unemployed and less likely to be paid the Living Wage.

The disability pay gap is catastrophic for our disabled members with the stark reality for many being a struggle to make ends meet, pay the bills and survive, let alone thrive. Since the introduction of mandatory gender pay reporting there is a requirement for employers with over two hundred and fifty staff to publish their gender pay gap. Nonetheless there is a need for much stronger enforcement. There is also no requirement for employers to actually take any concrete steps to tackle the gender pay gap and the pay gap in public services has in fact marginally increased since reporting began in 2018. However, when it comes to the disability pay gap there is not even a mandatory requirement that employers publish this data.

Conference notes that pay gaps are complex and disabled women and Black disabled people experience a double or even triple whammy. There is also a lack of data on how LGBT+ workers' pay compares to non-LGBT+ people. However, a survey of four thousand LGBT+ workers published by YouGov in June 2019 found that LGBT+ workers are paid £6,700 per annum less than their non-LGBT+ colleagues. Many LGBT+ workers conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity at work due to fears that it will impact on their promotion prospects and their pay.

Conference believes that we can only smash the pay gap for disabled workers if we take an intersectional approach that acknowledges the ways in which women and Black workers in particular are also discriminated against when it comes to pay. For many of our members their pay is impacted by layers of discrimination based on race, gender, disability and on sexual orientation or gender identity.

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to work with the National Disabled Members Committee to:

- 1) Campaign for the introduction of mandatory monitoring and reporting of the disability pay;
- 2) Produce guidance including a model action plan to reduce the disability pay gap that branches can use in negotiations with employers;
- 3) Publicise UNISON's Let's Be Reasonable report and our Reasonable Adjustments bargaining guide which includes a model policy and Accessibility Passport that can be used to negotiate locally;
- 4) Develop recruitment materials targeted at disabled workers highlighting UNISON's achievements and continuing work to reduce the disability pay gap;
- 5) Campaign for better enforcement of gender pay gap reporting, including considering whether non-compliant employers should face higher corporate tax bills, and for a statutory requirement for employers to publish robust action plans to tackle their pay gaps;
- 6) Take an intersectional approach to work on the pay gap, acknowledging the differential experience of disabled women and Black disabled workers, and work with the National LGBT+ Committee to support efforts to identify pay discrimination issues for disabled LGBT+ workers.

### *National Disabled Members Committee*

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Health and Safety

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## **22. Organising for Health and Safety**

Conference believes the coming years are likely to bring many challenges in the continued campaign for the safety and rights of workers across all sectors.

Conference notes how attacks on workers' rights, cuts in public services and changes in work practices, have eroded the safety of workers and exposed them to risks and stress.

Official figures show that stress and musculoskeletal injuries alone account for over a million cases of ill health or injury each year, and that over 370,000 workers have experience of work-related violent assault. These figures are only the tip of the iceberg with many thousand more such cases going unreported. New regulations to increase the penalties if the public attack emergency services workers need extending to a wider group of workers.

In addition, the growth of outsourcing, privatisation, the gig economy and other forms of precarious working has led to many, including UNISON members, working in unsafe conditions, and vulnerable to exploitation. These include cleaners, homecare, social care workers, and others who are often isolated and alone without anyone to support them, and with little or no knowledge of what rights they have. Many UNISON branches have led the way in responding to these changes, with examples of good organising practice that the rest of the trade union movement can learn from.

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However, more needs to be done to ensure that safety reps and other health and safety activists can respond to these organising challenges.

UNISON is proud of its record, working in partnership with its trade union partners both in the UK and abroad, of protecting and increasing health and safety standards both in the UK and globally. This has been in the face of the policies of this Tory led administration which has for ten years continued to attack workers' rights and has starved public services and enforcement agencies of the resources they need to keep workers and the public safe. The current Prime Minister's contempt for the safety and rights of working men and women is well known, so in the coming years the challenges UNISON faces are only likely to increase.

Conference notes the excellent guides UNISON has produced for its safety reps. In addition, work such as the "End Violence at Work" Charter and "Care workers for change" project have shown that even in the current climate UNISON can make a difference and engage its members, the public and employers in improving workers' safety.

However, most important of all are UNISON's Safety Reps. UNISON has the best, most comprehensive network of Safety Reps in the trade union movement. They are the eyes and ears of the workplace and are key to both workers' safety and UNISON's campaigning and organising strength. However, the fragmentation of public services has posed new challenges in how UNISON organises to protect its most vulnerable members.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Build on work such as the "End Violence at Work" Charter, to engage with members, the public and employers to protect the safety of workers;
- 2) Support the TUC Dying to Work charter for workers with terminal illnesses;
- 3) Explore new ways of training and organising Safety Reps, and promote examples of best practice, that responds to how workers and services are organised;
- 4) Continue to highlight the threat this government poses to the safety of workers and the public;
- 5) Continue to support Workers Memorial Day events and services;
- 6) Continue to work with our international partners across the trade union movement, including those in Europe, to increase international health and safety standards.

***National Executive Council***

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### **23. Health and Safety in the Workplace**

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Conference notes how attacks on workers' rights, cuts in public services and changes in work practices, have eroded the safety of workers.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Official figures show that stress and musculoskeletal injuries alone account for over a million cases of ill health or injury each year, and that over 370,000 workers have experience of work-related violent assault. These figures are only the tip of the iceberg with many thousand more such cases going unreported.

In addition the growth of outsourcing, privatisation, the gig economy and other forms of precarious working has led to many, including UNISON members, working in unsafe conditions, and vulnerable to exploitation. These include cleaners, homecare, social care workers, and others who are often isolated and alone without anyone to support them, and with little or no knowledge of what rights they have. Many UNISON branches have led the way in responding to these changes, with examples of good organising practice that the rest of the trade union movement can learn from. However more needs to be done to ensure that safety reps and other health and safety activists are able to respond to these organising challenges.

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Conference notes the excellent guides UNISON has produced for its Safety Reps. In addition work such as the "End violence at work" Charter and "Care workers for change" project have shown that even in the current climate UNISON can make a difference and engage its members, the public and employers in improving workers' safety.

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Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council and Health and Safety unit to:

- 1) Build on work such as the "End violence at work" Charter, to engage with members, the public and employers to protect the safety of workers;
- 2) Explore new ways of training and organising Safety Reps, and promote examples of best practice, that responds to how workers and services are organised;
- 3) Continue to highlight the threat this government poses to the safety of workers and the public;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 4) To continue to work with our international partners across the trade union movement, including those in Europe, to increase international health and safety standards.

*Camden*

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### **24. An Anti-Bullying and Harassment Charter Should Be Integral to Every Public Sector Workplace**

Conference notes that bullying and harassment are never acceptable. Wherever we work we all have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Every workplace must be a safe place to work.

Bullying occurs when an individual or group of individuals feel they are singled out for unfair treatment by one or more people. All too often this can be from managers and managers themselves are often bullied by their managers.

Bullying results in work related stress and ill health leading to absence and increased staff turnover.

UNISON, as the largest public sector trade union, must hold employers to account to protect our members and provide a safe and supportive workplace.

Bullying takes many forms and bullies show a range of behaviours. Likewise there is no one archetype of what defines a bully.

There is, however, overwhelming evidence that bullying is a very real problem in the workplace, and within public service workplaces in particular.

Evidence:

- 1) The annual NHS staff Survey demonstrates that 19.1 percent of staff report being bullied and that approximately 50 percent of staff report they have witnessed bullying;
- 2) The TUC report bullying to be one of the top five concerns of Health and Safety reps. This is worse in local and central government;
- 3) In a University of Manchester survey, 10 percent of workers report being bullied within a six month period and 47 percent of workers have witnessed bullying;
- 4) A report from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development highlights that Black and Asian employees, women, and people with disabilities are more likely to experience bullying and harassment. Almost 33 percent of Asian employees report feeling bullied.

It is reasonable to suspect that the true figures may be much higher.

Costs:

- a) Individuals who are bullied suffer stress and ill health. This manifests as anxiety, headaches, nausea, ulcers, sleeplessness, rashes, irritable bowel, high blood

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

pressure, crying, depression, reduced confidence and low self-esteem. Unfortunately is also sometimes leads to self-harm and suicide;

- b) There are also costs to the organisation- increased sickness, reduced morale leading to decreased productivity, reduced quality of services and increased staff turnover.

It more often results from a failure of organisational culture rather than from individual malevolence. Few people go to work intending to bully staff.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to encourage and assist branches to:

- i) Ensure policies are robust and comprehensive;
- ii) Recognise that policy alone does not prevent workplace bullying and harassment;
- iii) Put pressure on employers to work with UNISON to commit to a culture where bullying is seen as not only unacceptable but unthinkable.

Conference also calls on the National Executive Council with the Service Group Executives to:

- A) Develop a workplace anti-bullying and harassment charter to stand alongside workplace policies;
- B) Disseminate the charter via regional councils to branches and employers so that it is recognised and displayed in every workplace within every public service organisation;
- C) Co-ordinate the sharing of good practices throughout public services.

***Pennine Acute Health***

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Pensions

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### **25. Equal Pensions**

Conference notes that:

- 1) The Supreme Court decision in Walker v Innospec in July 2017, that upon John Walker's death his husband should get the same pension as would a wife had he married a woman, relies upon European Union (EU) law and sets aside a provision of the United Kingdom's Equality Act 2010 that permitted occupational pension schemes to pay benefits to surviving same-sex spouses and civil partners only in respect of contributions made since the introduction of civil partnership in 2005;
- 2) On 28 March 2018 the Treasury confirmed the position for couples in public service pension schemes:

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- a) The widow of a male spouse will receive benefits based on service since 1972;
  - b) The widow of a female spouse will receive benefits based on service since 1972;
  - c) The widower of a male spouse will receive benefits based on service since 1972;
  - d) The widower of a female spouse will receive benefits based on service since 1988;
- 3) On 27 April 2018, the government issued a briefing paper, Pensions: Civil Partnerships and same-sex marriages, outlining its intention to introduce regulatory changes to provide survivors of same sex marriages and civil partnerships the same pension provision as widows of opposite-sex marriages but there has been no subsequent progress.

Conference observes:

- i) The court has only decided John Walker's case; we'll only know, once it's tested, how wide a precedent it sets; there have been reports of pension schemes advising members with same-sex partners, at least in the first instance, as if Walker v Innospec does not apply;
- ii) The decision remains to be transposed into UK Law in accordance with the EU (Withdrawal) Act;
- iii) Public service pension schemes continue to treat widowers of female spouses less favourably than other surviving partners and the proposals in the government's briefing paper do not address this question.

Conference affirms that it aims to bring surviving same-sex spouses and civil partners' pensions and those for widowers of female spouses into line with those for widows of male spouses in all respects and that UNISON should continue to campaign to do so by means of primary domestic legislation.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council:

- A) To work with the Retired Members' National Committee, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) Members' National Committee, the National Labour Link Committee and others as appropriate to continue to campaign to achieve equality;
- B) To encourage the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to give the matter regular attention and to raise it, if need be, with the Scottish TUC, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and with others as appropriate.

***West Midlands Region***

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### **26. Ethical Procurement and Investment**

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Conference notes that UNISON is at the forefront of ethical procurement and investment in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and that investment decisions take this into account.

This has been brought into sharp relief with the wildfires in the USA and more recently Australia as well as the majority of councils calling a climate crisis. At the same time globalisation has contributed to the exploitation of workers and communities at home and abroad.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with regions and branches to:

- 1) Support this wholeheartedly by writing to the Pension Funds laying out our concerns and requesting information on the current and future regarding fossil fuels disinvestment and ensuring that any investment opportunities consider Environment, Social and Governance;
- 2) Write to employers whose employees are in the LGPS asking that future investment plans take the above into consideration.

### ***West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport***

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#### **27. Local Government Pension Scheme Pool Representation**

UNISON successfully campaigned for the statutory establishment of Pension Fund Boards to work within the Local Government Pension Scheme to allow UNISON to seek to represent the interests of scheme members. UNISON believes that these interests include but are not exclusive to keeping down transaction costs and campaigning to ensure that investment activities of funds are in line with the aims, values and policy of scheme members.

Fund boards have been in operation since 2015 and UNISON currently has activists on most of the fund Boards. Government policy has been to seek economics of scale and increased investment leverage by instructing Funds to pool resources initially into the asset size of £25 billion. However, since that time they have accepted scales under that figure and included two below, Wales and LLP.

UNISON has successfully campaigned within the Funds to allow for scheme member representation within the pools on all but three (Access, LLP and Wales).

UNISON believes that the government should include the establishment of a minimum two scheme member representatives for each Pool to ensure that the voice of the membership is heard.

Therefore, Conference instructs the National Executive Council to campaign at branch, regionally and nationally to call upon the Scheme Advisory Board to join with UNISON in requesting that the government includes statutory for at least two scheme member representatives on each Pool. Where they already have been appointed these should include a minimum two scheme members.

We believe that this will bring the Pools in line with the representation levels of scheme members within the LGPS.

# 2020 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

*City of Wolverhampton*

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### Campaigning

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#### Campaigns

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### **28. Campaigning For Public Services After The 2019 General Election**

The result of the December 2019 General Election in December represents an unprecedented challenge to our union.

The last time the Tories won an election with a majority of this size, UNISON did not exist and many of its members had either not been born or had not embarked upon their careers.

As the record shows, Tory governments with comfortable majorities have historically spelt disaster for public services, for the number of people in poverty and levels of inequality in our society.

Although our campaign response will bear some resemblance to how we have previously approached periods of Tory government, the manner of our fight back will have to reflect unique context in which Boris Johnson won power. Whilst EU exit played an obvious part in the outcome of the election, it's clear that the reasons go far wider and include long term economic change, huge regional disparities in wealth and opportunity, biased media reporting, political disaffection and the growth of right-wing populism. Just as importantly, our campaign response will also have to reflect the fact that the Tory route to victory saw them winning over a number of working class voters in parts of the country that have historically voted Labour.

Against this background it should be clear that UNISON and the wider trade union and labour movement must work hard to regain trust and credibility as a political voice for working people.

As the largest union and the voice for people working in public services in all parts of the UK, UNISON has a very clear contribution to make to this endeavour.

First, the union, on behalf of its members, must hold the UK government to account for its policy on public services. The Tories were elected on a promise to get Brexit done so that the country could move on and concentrate on the peoples' priorities. To this end they have made promises to recruit more nurses, build new hospitals, increase the number of GP appointments, boost investment in schools, fix social care and recruit more police officers.

With members at the heart of our public services we are uniquely placed to assess whether the UK government is delivering against their promises and whether their plans meet the needs of service users. As the union for local government we will have a clear sense of how cuts have hurt communities, vulnerable groups and limited the ability of Councils to lead the regeneration of their areas. As the union for police staff and all of the emergency services we have also seen the safety net for the public come under increasing pressure. As a union with the full range of jobs all of which we consider important and front line, we know truly whether any claimed extra money for public services is genuine or disguised cuts. As the economic impact

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

of EU exit and the Chancellors Budget becomes clear, our role in holding the Tories to account will be vital.

Secondly, we need to ensure that what is happening in public services remains at the top of the political agenda. Despite the promise to get Brexit done, the political news in the period ahead is likely to be dominated by protracted trade negotiations, as well as continued constitutional debates around the future of the UK itself. In this context UNISON's campaign should ensure that the aspirations of people and their families for decent public services cannot be forgotten.

Thirdly, we must play our part in developing an alternative policy that secures the future for our public services. Working alongside the broader labour movement, we must work towards a future offer for properly funded comprehensive public services that put people first and which deliver security for our members and their families.

Conference notes that not only is such an approach key to winning again, it is also a fundamental building block to addressing the underlying causes of Brexit and the political turbulence that has characterised the last decade.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to develop a campaign strategy that:

- 1) Engages with members and the public, particularly service users;
- 2) Promotes the importance of investing in and developing our public services for our communities and the economy;
- 3) Resists privatisation and fragmentation;
- 4) Puts the voices of public service workers at the centre of the campaign and promotes their worth regardless of their role, sector or employer type;
- 5) Takes account of the hostile nature of large sections of UK media;
- 6) Reflects the different circumstances in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales;
- 7) Includes the voices of women, Black, disabled, LGBT+, young and retired members and reflects their diverse needs;
- 8) Supports and resources campaigning at a community level, and amplifies those campaigns across the union;
- 9) Promotes trade unionism and builds our movement;
- 10) Works with the TUC, the STUC, the WTUC and the ICTU, as well as wider organisations that share our values.

***National Executive Council***

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### **29. Austerity – Defending the Living Standards of Older People**

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference will recall the concern expressed at some of the recommendations of the Intergenerational Commission's final report published in April 2018. Conference notes, now, that the report's publication has foreshadowed a series of further attacks on older people's entitlements and standards of living including:

- 1) The Taxpayers' Alliance's report, "Pensions Inequality", issued in August 2018 calling for an end to defined benefit pensions for public service workers; the Taxpayers' Alliance has since called for the freezing of state pensions;
- 2) The BBC's announcement in June 2019 that free TV licences for over 75's will be scrapped, a move that will affect up to 3.7 million pensioners;
- 3) The Intergenerational Foundation's report "Baby-boomers' concessions: How ticket discounts for a wealthier generation reinforce unfairness" attacking senior discounts at visitor attractions and proposing, instead, free entry for people on Pension Credit and "Bring a Granny" schemes;
- 4) The "Toyboy Tax" introduced from 15 May 2019 which has started to deprive couples of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit if one partner is over state pension age and the other under that age. They must apply for Universal Credit instead, typically making a couple £7,000 a year worse off; and,
- 5) The House of Lords report, "Tackling Intergenerational Unfairness" which recommends:
  - a) Scrapping the Triple Lock mechanism for raising the State Retirement Pension;
  - b) Abolishing the free TV licence for over 75 year olds;
  - c) Delaying the Winter Fuel Allowance and Bus Pass until 5 years after Retirement Age;
  - d) Regarding the Winter Fuel Allowance and Bus Pass as taxable income;
  - e) Subjecting people over the State Retirement Age to National Insurance payments.

Conference rejects this attempt to divide generations, by setting young people against retired people. Although accompanied by crocodile tears shed for young people, these attacks come not from the young but from the rich, who contend there is not enough money to go around because the baby-boomers have run off with it.

Rather, Conference asserts, there is plenty of money to go around. What makes it appear otherwise and the reason we are being set against one another is that, over the last forty years, the proportion of the United Kingdom's gross domestic product going to wages has dropped from 65 percent to less than half with correspondingly more going to rent, interest and profit. It is a question of class not age. The most effective way for UNISON to defend older people from these attacks is to make solidarity between generations a key part of its strategy to oppose austerity and to develop a strategy against austerity that mobilises many more older people.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference opposes these proposals and calls upon the National Executive Council to campaign vigorously against them by all appropriate means.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council, working through the appropriate UNISON structures to develop proposals for implementation by the whole union which will both:

- i) Enable UNISON to support efforts to defend retired members and older people from attacks on their standard of living;
- ii) Mobilise all UNISON members, both working and retired to make a greater contribution to UNISON's campaigning to end austerity.

### ***National Retired Members' Committee***

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#### **30. Public Sector Exit Payment Cap- Another Attack on Public Sector Workers**

The government introduced powers to cap exit payments in the public sector at £95,000 in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015. This law was aimed at the senior managers who received six figure golden handshakes but has also affected long serving employees on incomes of over £30,000

Anyone working in the public sector who gets an exit/redundancy/early retirement settlement may be affected. It will mostly affect high earners, but despite previous government promises, it will also affect moderate earners if they have long service such as nurses, social workers, paramedics and trading standards officers – particularly if they were previously entitled to access early retirement as an alternative to being made redundant.

It includes payments made to an exiting employee, or a third party on behalf of the employee, including:

- 1) Redundancy payments;
- 2) Any pension top-up to enable early retirement;
- 3) Any payment made as part of an agreed exit settlement between the employer and the employee.

If you have long service, you may have earned redundancy entitlements that mean you will exceed this cap.

Conference notes that given that there are proportionately more women and part-time workers in public service jobs than in the wider workforce it follows that there is also likely to be a gender impact.

Many of our members are unaware of the implications of this draconian piece of legislation. They may be planning their retirement unaware that they may be entitled to far less than they believed.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to raise awareness in all branches of the implications of the law should it be enforced.

# 2020 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

*Northamptonshire County*

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### **31. Universal Credit in-work Conditionality**

Conference notes the Government set out in-work conditionality in regulation 90 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013. These rules mean that anyone earning less than their individual earnings threshold (or joint earnings threshold for a couple) will be subject to in-work conditionality and sanctions by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The threshold is set by multiplying the national minimum wage by the expected hours that Job Centre Plus sets (usually 35 hours but can be adjusted in certain circumstances). This figure is then multiplied by 52 and divided by 12.

This is a fundamental shift in the benefits system and for the first time part-time workers whose wages are supplemented by in-work benefits will be expected to make efforts to increase their income. This may include increasing the hours worked, finding extra work or finding a new job with a higher income. This also means that families earning higher rates of pay will have to work fewer hours than the lowest paid to be free of the strictures of in-work conditionality

Many UNISON members work part time for charities, voluntary agencies and local authorities who cannot extend the working hours of their employees, even though they may wish to, owing to the financial constraints imposed by austerity

Conference also notes that the main in-work conditionality rules are currently suspended under rules which mean that (unless an individual is selected for the 'in-work pilot scheme') anyone earning over £338 a month (for single people) or £541 a month (for couples) will not be subject to in-work conditionality. Nevertheless, the principle of in-work conditionality has been set out in the legislation so we can be quite clear about what is planned and as a union with many part time workers UNISON needs to prepare members for when in-work conditionality is rolled out.

Conference is clear that workplaces with high, and well organised, trade union membership are the best ways of delivering higher wages.

Conference instructs National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign against the roll out of Universal Credit in its current guise;
- 2) Produce guidance that helps employers of workers in public services understand the difficulties that will be created by in work progression. For example, they may see their part time employees called to regular interviews with DWP and subject to sanctions which may make it difficult for them to afford to keep working in their existing jobs. They may have problems with higher turnover and loose good quality part time staff who they may wish to retain;
- 3) Consider how UNISON's workplace learning activities can promote career and wage progression in areas of work with a low paid, part time and undervalued workforce such as the care sector;
- 4) Promote guidance for branches on negotiating effective flexible working policies with employers which will benefit members who need a set number of part time hours because of caring or child care responsibilities;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 5) Continue to campaign for the raising of the National Minimum Wage to (at least) the level of the real living wage and the removal of exemptions for younger workers.

**UNISON Essex**

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### **32. Fair Deals for Care Workers**

Conference notes the continued acceptance of successive governments and society to minimise the importance and continued reliance of our most vulnerable on care workers in the community and residential homes.

Care workers provide an essential service and deliver that service in many ways whether community based through the voluntary sector in residential homes, local authority NHS and as live in carers.

Care workers have been consistently underpaid and undervalued for the job they do.

They are not classed as essential services and yet without them the whole social care infrastructure would collapse and pressure on the NHS would increase to significantly.

There would be no one to ensure our clients nutritional or hydration needs are met, no one to ensure they are washed and importantly to provide social contact and to identify any new health, safeguarding and self-neglect issues.

Conference believes it is time to significantly raise the profile of all care workers, UNISON believes that care work is an Essential Service and therefore our members should receive the appropriate remuneration and recognition they deserve.

Over 90 percent of the workforce are women often low paid with minimal training and poor terms and conditions

Conference believes that is time to raise the image of our downtrodden members.

To manage the increase in the ageing population the government will need to attract young people to work in the sector with an attractive wage and clear career pathway, so it is time to raise the profile and the wage.

We congratulate UNISON on taking the fight for sleep in payments to the Supreme Court but more needs to be done

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with Labour Link, Service Groups and Self-Organised groups to call on the Government to recognise care work as an essential service and profession and to provide a career pathway;
- 2) To campaign for all authorities and providers to recognise the UNISON ethical care charter and residential care charter as minimum standards for those providing care to the most vulnerable in our society;

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) To produce campaign materials for branches to use in organising, recruiting care workers and activists and campaigning in the local community and with local community groups for better recognition for care workers and the service they provide;
- 4) Report back to the 2021 conference with progress of the campaign.

*Kent*

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### **33. The Future of our Political Fund and the Tory Threat to Democracy**

Conference notes that the result of the General Election has created a great deal of uncertainty around the future of union political funds. The introduction of the opt-in, which was a requirement of the Trade Union Act, has resulted in a reduction in the resources that UNISON and other unions can use to ensure that the voices of working people are heard loud and clear on the political stage. Labour had pledged to scrap the Trade Union Act, but the outcome of the election inevitably means a further period in which fund income will be under pressure.

Conference is under no illusion that the intention of the Conservatives in introducing the Trade Union Act has been to weaken its main political opponent. At a more fundamental level, in diminishing the political voices of trade unions and, by extension the Labour party, the Tory government is creating serious democratic imbalance in which labour is weakened relative to capital.

The Coalition UK government and subsequent Conservative government and their cuts have hit the north of England hard and their so-called Fair Funding Review will make it worse.

Conference sees a link between moves to cut services and moves to curtail democracy, local government and trade unions.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to stand up for democracy and to lead the fight back within the trade union movement. This should involve:

- 1) A campaign to revive real local democracy;
- 2) Genuine Fair funding for public bodies based on need;
- 3) Undertaking a programme of work with the political funds to remove barriers to opting-in to the political fund, and develop the way we talk about the value of our political work with people when they join the union;
- 4) Working with Labour Link, the Campaign Fund, Labour Unions (previously TULO), the TUC and other unions to share best practice on political funds;
- 5) Doing everything possible to make effective interventions with our political campaigns.

*Northern Region*

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### **34. Towards the Next Election**

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference recognises that, the December election despite Jeremy Corbyn's best efforts to make it about things that would improve the lives of most people, became the 'Brexit election'.

Vicious attacks by the media and right wing MP's had undermined the standing of Jeremy Corbyn, he was perceived by many former Labour voters as weak and ineffective, consequently the tendency of equating the socialist policies within the manifesto with 'corbynism' led to a similar 'mistrust' that they were achievable.

Conference recognises that it would be a mistake to think that this result means that socialist ideas are not popular.

Polls showed that 81 percent of voters support an increase in spending on the NHS, 66 percent support tax rises for those earning more than £80,000 a year, 66 percent support building 150,000 council homes and 59 percent support a green industrial revolution. Polls also show that the majority of voters favour the nationalisation of energy, water, railway and the royal mail.

A further poll by the TUC that three out of four Labour voters who voted Tory still want the government to protect and enhance workplace rights.

Conference believes that the huge number of young people who registered to vote, inspired by Labours manifesto and promises, gives hope for the future.

Conference accepts that whilst there may have been other factors for the defeat, the main one was the party's prevarication over Brexit and voter's reactions to it, particularly in Brexit supporting working class areas which led to the obscuring of the socialist content of the party manifesto. A manifesto which this Conference believes would have transformed our country.

Of the 54 seats that the Conservatives gained from Labour, 52 of them were in areas that voted leave in 2016.

Yet Corbyn still won more votes than Miliband in 2015, Brown in 2010 or Blair in 2005.

Socialist ideas have not been buried.

On the other side the Tory manifesto was almost devoid of content other than 'Get Brexit done'.

As such with a large majority it gives the government the power to introduce legislation as they see fit and there are already concerns about u turns and attacks on workers' rights.

Johnson made much about improving the state of the country but little of the fact that he has been a part of the Tory government whose actions in the last decade have led to:

Homelessness increasing by 165 percent.

£30 billion cuts to welfare payments, housing subsidies and social services.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Over one million jobs lost in public services.

Food bank use increased by 3700 percent.

NHS waiting lists at an all-time high, accident and emergency in meltdown and hospitals at full stretch

It is ironic that one of their few actual commitments is to increase police numbers by 20000 having been directly responsible for cutting them in the first place!

We are now faced by a Tory government to the right of the previous one led by an Eton educated bigot which is likely to be in place for another 5 years, which by its myriad links to hedge funds, big business and the Trump administration will only pay lip service to Improving the lot of working people.

Conference recognises over the coming years, unions will be the first line of defence for working class people.

It needs to be recognised that of those workers who turned their back on labour many are likely to be members of trade unions including UNISON.

Conference further recognises that the Labour movement needs to accept that the option of remain is a boat that has sailed and that we need to champion a left-wing vision for Britain's future outside the EU based on the manifesto commitments made last year.

And that UNISON should:

- 1) Initiate a campaign of ongoing communication with members as to the reality of this Tory government highlighting U-turns and attacks which impact on our class;
- 2) To actively oppose any proposed legislation which seeks to shackle the existing rights and freedoms (such as they are) of trade unions;
- 3) To support any trade unions facing attacks from Government legislation;
- 4) Call for a national TUC led demonstration by the end of 2020;
- 5) To call upon all sections of the Trade union and Labour movement, climate strike groups and other community organisations to convene a 'conference of resistance'. This should include consideration of a joined-up strategy to co-ordinate disputes and mobilise rank and file membership as widely as possible in support of disputes where they are taking place;
- 6) Call on Labour Link to support the policies on which the Labour Party stood in December 2019.

*City of Wolverhampton*

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### **35. Democratic Socialism**

Capitalism is responsible for world-wide programmes of privatisation, attacks on workers' jobs, wages and conditions, increasing inequality and poverty, especially in

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

the less developed countries, environmental destruction, wars without end for whole sections of the world and a massive increase in profits for the few transnational companies which dominate the world economy.

Never more than now are the failings of capitalism exposed. It is so exposed that even the bosses recognise the crisis. The response of the bosses a decade ago during the global banking crisis was to give away to the failing system billions of pounds of workers' money. Bailing out bankers and the super-rich one percent with our money to protect their system while imposing brutal austerity on the majority of the population is unacceptable and not the way forward for trade unionists and working class people.

Conference believes that there is an economic alternative to capitalism based on the common and democratic public ownership of the major elements of the economy, namely democratic socialism.

Accordingly, Conference calls for:

- 1) The nationalisation of all the banks on the basis of democratic public ownership, i.e. run by representatives of banking workers and trade unions, the wider working class, as well as the government. Take them completely out of the hands of the fat cats who made the mess! Compensation should be paid only on the basis of proven need;
- 2) The nationalised banks to offer cheap loans and mortgages for housing and for the planned development of industry, services and social housing;
- 3) The democratic public ownership and the opening of the books of the major companies that dominate the economy; let popular committees of workers, trade unionists and consumer groups see where the profits have gone and what their financial situation really is and for no job losses;
- 4) The ending of fuel poverty by implementing a windfall tax on the oil and gas companies as a step towards nationalising them. Public ownership of the fossil fuel corporations would allow a massive transfer of oil and gas profits to invest in renewable energy and a socialist green new deal to create jobs and tackle the climate crisis;
- 5) A trade union struggle to immediately increase the national minimum wage to £10 per hour without exemptions for young people, in line with TUC policy. The introduction of a sliding scale of wages with automatic increases to cover inflation. It's a scandal that in 2020 the average pay of the top 100 bosses in Britain is currently £901.30 an hour while so many working families are living in poverty;
- 6) The ending of privatisation and for a massive programme of investment to improve public services and to defend public sector jobs and pay.

Accordingly, this meeting calls on the leadership of UNISON to use all means at its disposal to publicise and popularise these issues amongst the membership and the working class generally.

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

*City of Glasgow*

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### **36. Anti-Trade Union Laws – Resist, Repeal, Replace.**

Conference reaffirms its call for the repeal of anti-trade union laws and notes that proposals put forward by Johnson are part of a restrictive legislative assault on workers and their unions began 40 years ago.

As a result, workers in the UK have received a progressively smaller share of the national gross domestic production (GDP) and suffer from some of the most insecure working conditions in Europe.

Despite Johnson's promise to "protect and enhance workers' rights..... making Britain the best place in the world to work" it is clear that the as yet unpublished Employment Bill will undermine existing individual rights and further restrict the right to strike.

The proposed introduction of Minimum Service Agreements on the railways demands an immediate and collective response from the trade union movement.

The Trade Union Act 2016 introduced restrictions on "important public service", now railway workers, successors in title to those who were penalised in the Taff Vale judgement in 1901, face yet more restrictions on their right to strike on the basis that they are deemed an "essential public service".

According to the ILO, railways are not an essential public service, an opinion adopted as binding by the European Court of Human Rights (in a case relating to strikes on the Russian railways), and so binding on the UK under the terms of the Human Rights Act.

Conference believes that if the proposed legislation is not resisted, the Tories will target the right to take action across more sectors, undermining more trade unions.

In this new political climate, it is time for the trade union movement to reassert its opposition to anti-trade union laws and to reinforce our demand for a framework of law that is in line with ILO standards and which respects the autonomy and authority of trade unions to determine their own rule books in line with the democratic decisions of their members.

Working together, those sister organisations have the expertise and the campaigning experience to assist our efforts to resist future attacks, to popularise our demand for the repeal of the anti-trade union laws and for a framework of trade union freedoms that recognise the essential role of trade unions.

To that end Conference believes UNISON should actively support proposals to re-launch the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom and calls on the union to strengthen its ties and affiliations to the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom and the Institute of Employment Rights and to support and promote their work.

*Manchester*

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### **37. Free Our Unions**

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference notes:

- 1) That the Tories have moved fast to even further curtail the right to strike, with new proposals to outlaw all-out strikes on the railways through minimum service requirements;
- 2) The removal of the clause protecting EU-derived workers' rights from the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill, making clear their intention to speed up their race to the bottom.

Conference believes:

- a) That the right to strike is essential to the labour movement's ability to stand up for workers' interests and for democracy. Yet as things stand - as things stood even before the 2016 Trade Union Act - it was severely curtailed in the UK;
- b) That multiple anti-union laws going back to 1980 mean our movement is fighting the mounting challenges of low pay, insecurity and erosion of hard-won terms and conditions with our hands tied behind our backs.

Conference further notes:

- i) The policy passed unanimously by last year's TUC Congress to fight to repeal "not just the 2016 Trade Union Act [but] all anti-union laws and replace them with strong legal rights for workers and unions, including rights to strike and picket";
- ii) That the motion specified: "strong rights to join, recruit to and be represented by an independent union; strike/take industrial action by a process, at a time and for demands of their own choosing, including in solidarity with any other workers and for broader social and political goals; and picket freely";
- iii) That this is closely in line with policy passed at repeated Labour Party conferences, most recently last year.

Conference resolves:

- A) To work closely with the rail unions to oppose and defeat the new attack on the right to strike;
- B) To clearly, vocally and actively campaign for the repeal of ALL anti-union laws and their replacement with strong workers' rights, including strong rights to strike and picket, in line with the TUC Congress policy; and call for the wider labour movement to do likewise;
- C) To campaign together with other unions, the Labour Party and organisations including the Institute of Employment Rights, Free Our Unions and the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom as appropriate.

*Lambeth*

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### 38. Defend the Right to Strike

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes that the Tories put their election pledge to create new laws to force workers to provide a minimum service during transport strikes into the Queen's speech on 19 December 2019. This flagged their intention to bring such a bill in this Parliament.

Conference believes that:

- 1) The UK already has the toughest anti-trade union laws in Europe. The Tories already made balloting for strikes considerably harder with their new legislation brought in 2016. Unchallenged and given the opportunity they will keep making it harder and harder for workers to take effective collective action;
- 2) If Boris Johnson and Grant Shapps get their bill through Parliament to impede the effectiveness of transport strikes, they will try to do similar things in other industries;
- 3) It is not just unions with members in transport such as RMT, ASLEF, TSSA, Unite and GMB that need to fight this attack but all unions. It is only by coming together as a union movement that these attacks can be stopped. We need unity and solidarity of the entire movement;
- 4) It is no coincidence that the Tory government is bringing this legislation following an important series of strikes on the railways by RMT to defend the role of the guard on our trains.

Conference resolves to:

- a) Ask the National Executive Council to write to the transport unions to offer solidarity;
- b) Encourage branch and regions do whatever they can to deliver solidarity to current transport strikes such as those in defence of the safety critical role of the train guard including inviting speakers from the disputes to union meetings, making a donation to their strike funds and visiting picket lines with banners;
- c) Ask the National Executive Council to call on the TUC to facilitate an urgent national campaign against this legislation which should include a national day of action. To be successful, this needs to go beyond token gestures and should be mobilised for seriously across the labour movement.

***London Fire Brigade***

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### **39. Fighting Tories Anti Trade Union Laws**

Conference believes that:

- 1) The election of the Boris Johnson led Tory government represents a renewed threat to the pay, jobs and working conditions of workers as well as to trade union rights;
- 2) It will act in the interests of big business.

Conference notes:

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- a) The government's implicit support for the High Court decision to prevent strike action in Royal Mail despite the national CWU ballot result of a 97 percent yes vote on a 76 percent turnout;
- b) The Tory manifesto commitment to introduce new anti-union legislation, targeted specifically at the rail and transport unions which we believe will be extended to other sectors.

Conference believes that:

- i) There needs to be an immediate meeting of the TUC and the unions to discuss and prepare the union movement for attacks by the Tory government;
- ii) No union or unions must be allowed to fight alone – if any union is targeted by anti-union laws, all trade unions should come to their aid.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to call on the TUC to:

- A) Organise a special conference on this issue - open to workplace reps, shop stewards and other activists;
- B) Organise a Saturday London demonstration in 2020 against the Tory anti-union laws, and to defend the transport unions and the CWU – for workers' unity against the Tories;
- C) If the TUC fails to undertake points A) and B) Conference instructs the National Executive Council to approach those unions who are willing to organise such a campaign.

**Camden**

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### **40. 2020/2021 Year of Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Mental health affects everyone, but many public service workers are at heightened risk of mental health difficulties and elevated risk of suicide compared to the general population. Conference believes that as a trade union supporting public services workers we should demonstrate that mental health concerns, particularly in the workplace, are taken seriously and without stigma. As mental health difficulties can impact on an individuals' working life and vice versa, they are more likely to end up in workplace disputes requiring UNISON support.

Although mental health has risen on the public agenda over recent years, there is still much work that needs to be done. A recent index of 301 diseases found mental health problems to be one of the main causes of the overall disease disability worldwide and depression as the leading cause of disability in the world. Despite these statistics, mental health services continue to be chronically underfunded, crisis support available is limited, we have not yet achieved parity of esteem and stigma remains.

Research surrounding numerous mental health awareness campaigns has demonstrated the positive impact this can have in reducing stigma, and that individuals exposed to these campaigns are more likely to talk about and seek information relating to their mental health. The awareness raising that got the issue

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of mental health into the public consciousness is also what provided the mandate for further funding and political attention. It stands to reason therefore that further awareness and campaigning would likely lead to increased support for members (as patients and as mental healthcare staff) and further funding for these services that are in dire need.

We therefore propose that conference considers making 2020/2021 the year of mental health and wellbeing, to demonstrate UNISON's commitment to this cause.

### ***Northamptonshire Health Workers***

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#### **41. SEND - Children and Families at the Heart of Decision Making**

Conference notes that the SEND community comprises parents, carers and education professionals. SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Conference further notes that the SEND community, which is an independent, grass roots community, is working for educational equality for all children and young people with SEND. The SEND Manifesto encapsulates what this means in practice, essentially fair and sufficient funding, accountability and transparency and inclusion.

The SEND community want children and families to be at the heart of the process (as per the 2014 Children and Families Act) and for the key principles of the SEND manifesto to be implemented.

We call on the National Executive Council to support campaigns by the SEND community and to lobby the TUC to adopt the principles of the SEND manifesto, and to lobby the government accordingly.

The National Executive Council is instructed accordingly.

***Bristol***

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#### **42. Women Exercising their Right to Choose are not Criminals - Decriminalise Abortion Now**

Conference notes:

- 1) Abortion has been decriminalised across Australia after the remaining state where it was illegal, New South Wales (NSW), voted to reform its laws;
- 2) In the absence of a functioning Stormont government in Northern Ireland, in July 2019, MPs passed the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Act which contained a provision placing a duty on the government to regulate to provide for access to abortion in Northern Ireland. The removal of sections 58 and 59 of the Victorian 1861 Offences against the Persons Act means abortion will no longer be a criminal offense in Northern Ireland. This now opens the door to putting services in place in Northern Ireland so women can access safe free legal abortions. This is a massive victory for women in Northern Ireland;

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) In the United Kingdom (England and Wales), we are still governed by the archaic Offences against the Person Act of 1861. Now is the time to push with greater confidence and force to decriminalise abortion in the rest of the UK;
- 4) The successful campaign in areas like Ealing to prevent anti-abortion campaigners from protesting and intimidating women outside abortion clinics.

Conference believes:

- a) All women in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland should have unrestricted access to safe, free, legal and local abortion;
- b) The general public is pro-choice, estimated to be by 70 percent;
- c) No other medical procedure needs the consent of two doctors – all other medical procedures require the consent of the patient only;
- d) The British Medical Association, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Royal College of Midwives have all called for decriminalisation;
- e) It is time for our law to catch up with modern medicine;
- f) Every child should be a wanted child, every mother a willing mother.

Conference resolves to:

- i) Redouble efforts to use the structures within our union to ensure members are kept up to date with the decriminalisation campaign;
- ii) Publicise the Abortion Rights Campaign and encourage all branches and regions to affiliate in line with national policy;
- iii) Encourage members to lobby their MP's to support decriminalisation;
- iv) Support the call for exclusion zones outside abortion providers.

***Camden***

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### **43. Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance (COPS)**

Conference notes that the British state and employers have always relied on the use of the police, secret services and free-lance operatives to spy on the labour and trade union movement and other campaign groups. Swathes of campaigns and individuals have been targeted by Britain's secret police for decades. This has been shown in numerous court cases over the last few decades e.g. in the recent construction workers blacklisting court cases and Spy Cops court cases.

The Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance (COPS) helps coordinate, publicise and support the quest for justice for people affected by political undercover police spying, and to ensure such abuses do not continue.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that everyone has the right to participate in trade union and political activity and the struggle for social and environmental justice, without fear of persecution, victimisation, objectification, or interference in their lives. However trade unionists, political activists, ordinary citizens have been spied on and psychologically and sexually abused by officers for being part of, or simply knowing people who were part of, such campaigns. More than 1,000 political groups have been spied on since the Special Demonstration Squad was formed in 1968. All of them have a right to know what was done.

Conference condemns:

- 1) Police aiding the illegal blacklisting of trade union members and political activists, and passing information on individuals to private investigators and corporations;
- 2) The spying on families, friends, witnesses and campaigners seeking truth and justice over the deaths of loved ones, such as the Lawrence family, and associated institutional racism;
- 3) The gross intrusion of undercover officers forming intimate and sexual relationships whilst in their undercover persona and associated institutional sexism;
- 4) The use of the identities of dead children by undercover officers;
- 5) The large number of wrongful convictions brought about by misconduct of police and prosecutors;
- 6) The creation of police files on solicitors representing protestors.

Conference also views with concern the way the Undercover Policing Inquiry or Pitchford Inquiry, convened in 2018 and due to report in 2023, is being conducted. The Chair of the Inquiry, Sir John Mitting, has awarded anonymity to undercover police officers which adds to the suspicion that this inquiry will lead to a whitewash.

Conference calls for:

- a) An end to spying on social justice, environmental, industrial and family campaigns;
- b) The outlawing of intimate and sexual relationships by police officers whilst undercover;
- c) The release of the cover names of the officers involved;
- d) Protective measures to prevent serving and retired intelligence gathering officers passing information to private and public sector employers and investigators;
- e) Support and encouragement for police whistle-blowers;
- f) A public apology from the police to all those affected.

Conference calls for:

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- i) A thorough, transparent independent inquiry;
- ii) The Inquiry legal team to seize the files and disclose them to the subjects and their lawyers;
- iii) Extend the Inquiry to cover activities beyond England;
- iv) The abolition of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal and its secret trials without right of appeal;
- v) Openness and transparency about the past, with those spied on by the political policing units informed and given access to their files and information provided to the families of deceased children whose identities were used by undercover officers.

Conference agrees to affiliate to Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance and, where practicable, to publicise the work COPS does and support future COPS events.

*Hackney*

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### **44. Probate Charges**

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has demonstrated an abuse of monopoly powers by seeking statutory approval to introduce charges for an administrative service, namely the grant of probate, based not on the actual cost in terms of time, but based on the value of the estate. For example, this will increase charges from a fixed charge of £155, if submitted by a solicitor (or £215 by an individual) to £750 if the value of the estate is £300,000 or £2500 for an estate of £500,000. Either this service should be the subject of competition or there has to be an independent body to regulate such charges. A customer should not be charged more for the same service according to their income or wealth.

The MoJ claims that this new fee structure will help to subsidise other activities by Judicial Courts. This new tax, despite being referred by the MoJ as a fee, has no justification whatsoever. It is an arbitrary charge on the assets of deceased people of any age and will be particularly hard on parts of the country where housing costs are, and have been, high in relation to wages and to the disadvantage of public sector workers, their families and bereaved descendants.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to liaise with the relevant bodies to prevent the abuse of monopoly powers in such circumstances and for an independent consumer protection organisation given powers to ensure that charges for services made by Government Departments are fair and reasonable.

*Devon County*

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### **45. Salford Santas – Trade Unionists Supporting our Communities**

Conference notes the fantastic success of the “Salford Santas” project.

This project, initiated by a UNISON convenor, has seen Salford’s Waste and Recycling Operatives gather presents worth tens of thousands of pounds from the

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

people of Salford in order to ensure that more deprived children in the city have something to open on Christmas Day.

UNISON has worked with other trade unions, charities, Salford City Council and local media outlets to promote the scheme.

Conference believes that as a public service trade union, UNISON is at its best when we stand with service users and local communities.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to promote the “Salford Santas” initiative and to encourage all branches to consider whether they can put something similar in place in their local area.

*Salford City*

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Public Services

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### **46. Public Services in Post Brexit Britain**

Conference believes that with the European Union question settled, it is imperative that the government tackles the multiple crises facing our public services. Conference notes with alarm that whilst politicians’ attention has focused on Brexit, the problems faced by our underfunded public services have multiplied.

Conference notes that Boris Johnson’s Tories made numerous promises in his manifesto and Queen’s Speech relating to public services. His party pledged:

- 1) £34 billion of funding for the health service by 2024;
- 2) £5 billion of funding for social care provision by 2024;
- 3) £14 billion of funding for schools;
- 4) 20,000 new police officers;
- 5) To take advantage of Brexit by utilising state aid and ensuring the public sector “buys British”.

Conference resolves to hold the government to account on these promises. However, Conference notes with alarm that many of the promises above may not have been made in good faith. The Conservative Party promised £34 billion worth of funding for the health service - “the biggest cash boost in the NHS’ history”. Yet Conference believes this is another example of Tory financial book cooking. The Nuffield Trust pointed out that much of this money was not new funding and was actually taken from savings hospitals had already been forced to make. The Tories have also come under fire for including inflation in their calculations - the real term spending increase is £20.5 billion, rather than £34 billion, which Full Fact claims is not the “biggest cash boost in the NHS’ history”, but rather the largest increase since 2004/05 - 2009/10.

Whilst Conference does not have confidence in the government to implement its promises relating to public services, it also believes that these promises do not go far enough. Conference notes that the 20,000 new police officers promised would only

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just cover the cuts to police numbers implemented by the Tories since 2010. Conference further notes that the Tories pledged 20,000 new police officers, and yet no new police support staff. Conference further notes that the Conservative manifesto promised a pay rise for teachers, and yet made no mention of teaching assistants or other school staff. Conference believes that in their announcements about schools and policing, the government prioritised securing a positive headline, rather than making sustainable improvements to public services. Investment in support staff in both sectors is crucial.

On NHS spending, The Health Foundation claims that the Tories' proposed 3.3 percent spending increase falls short of the 4 percent required to address waiting times and the under provision of mental health services. Conference notes with concern that spending on mental health fell by £600 million between 2010-15 and that there are 5,000 fewer mental health nurses now than in 2010. Conference notes with alarm that private firms have been handed £15 billion in NHS contracts over the last five years - this figure has soared by 89 percent in five years. Conference calls upon the government to use Brexit as a clean break, and remove the international outsourcing firms who suck public money out of the NHS whilst driving down working conditions and service standards.

Conference notes with alarm that funding for councils is, as a share of GDP, at its lowest level since 1948. Since 2010, resources devoted to neighbourhood services across Britain fell by 27 percent (£8.9 billion). Conference believes that the government has no plan to tackle the chronic underfunding of local government. Conference further notes that many vital council services are now outsourced to private companies, in expensive and underperforming contracts which leave councils with no bargaining power or flexibility. Conference notes that between 2008-13, outsourced council contracts increased by 85 percent, and yet over a quarter of these contracts failed. This has significant adverse effects for local residents. Conference believes that the best way forward for local government is a deliberate policy of insourcing services.

Conference notes that the £1 billion per year which has been promised by the government social care provision falls well short of the current funding gaps in adult and children's services. £7 billion has been cut from adult social care since 2010, resulting in falling care quality and care packages being cut or rationed. Conference recognises that the current model is fundamentally flawed and is too often driven by pressure to deliver minimum services at minimum cost.

Conference notes that within five years, three million care workers will be needed to meet the growing demands for both home care and residential care. Conference further notes that the social care sector has an alarmingly high staff turnover rate of 30 percent. Conference believes that secure, well-paid jobs will be key to tackling the social care crisis. Conference notes that the only priority indicated by this government so far in relation to social care is to ensure that people do not have to sell their homes to pay for social care. Conference reaffirms that our priority for the sector is to create a fully funded, National Care Service characterised by top quality care and good jobs.

The government must ensure that Britain's post Brexit future is not characterised by low wages, low regulation and poor public services. Instead, the government must

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

use the opportunity to re-nationalise public services including rail and mail, introduce an interventionist state aid policy and ensure that our public services only procure services from good employers, or go one better and take services in-house.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Campaign for a fair funding deal for local government, the NHS, social care, schools, the police service and all public services;
- b) Campaign for an end to public sector outsourcing and the mandatory insourcing of all services at the end of existing contracts or sooner where practicable.
- c) Work with local authorities to enshrine minimum employment standards through the Ethical Care Charter and Living Wage accreditation.

### ***North West Region***

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#### **47. UK Public Procurement Post-Brexit Must Protect Public Services**

Conference notes that although the UK exited the EU on the 31 January 2020 there is still a lot of Post- Brexit legislation changes, to be expected in the next few years that impacts on public services.

Conference further notes that a "hard Brexit" was legally hard wired into Boris Johnson's Withdrawal Agreement, which now puts at risk getting a deal that benefits the economy and workers in the UK.

Ministers were prohibited from extending the transition negotiating period and so with such a short negotiation period of nine months a World Trade Organisation or No Deal with the EU is still a real risk.

The red lines particularly harmful to public services and workers was the removal of any commitments to a future "Level Playing Field" in the future EU - UK Treaty. The removal of the "Level Playing Field" from the Agreement will significantly weaken workplace, equality, health and safety, consumer and citizens, environmental and climate change standards, regulations, rights and protections.

Conference notes that this deliberately paves the way for a Free Trade Agreement with the EU so that the government can negotiate more easily a Free Trade Agreement with the US with lower standards, regulations, rights and protections.

Conference notes that the shape of post Brexit public procurement in the UK largely depends on two things:

- 1) The details of the "deal" reached during the transition period, if indeed one is reached at all;
- 2) The strength of the government's drive to push for relaxing regulations.

The UK government is exploring how potential freedom from the EU procurement regime might allow it to alter public procurement in the UK in the longer term.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes that privatisation of public services under the EU is not mandatory but liberalisation is encouraged and is often hard to reverse once in place. The EU Public Procurement Directive, followed and set out in the UK Public Contract Regulations, only set the rules once a public authority has decided to test the market or outsource public services.

The current EU rules, successfully campaigned for by UNISON with the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), includes the need to consider the "price quality ratio" in tenders where along with price, social and environmental provisions are considered so that the "quality" (for example paying the living wage, having a gender pay audit, promoting diverse workforce, sustainability service plan etc.) of a particular bid could be considered equally alongside price.

The "price quality ratio" removed and replaced the MEAT – Most Economic Advantageous Tender - driver that has fuelled the race to the bottom because previously all that was considered was price as the most important criteria when considering an outsource tender. The UK has not taken up the opportunities inside existing EU regulations to be more progressive.

Conference also notes that public procurement in the UK is a devolved matter and the Scottish government has used the new EU regime to introduce social and environment provisions much further and comprehensively than the Westminster government.

Conference notes that UNISON has been critical of the EU public procurement regime and campaigned from much more to be done to improve and make mandatory the inclusion of social and environmental provisions in public procurement regulations and stop the race to the bottom.

The EU procurement regulations (and in particular their interface with EU state aid and cross border competition rules) can definitely be improved and UNISON has long standing objections but losing them all could open the ability of public bodies to outsource or sell off services quickly to a single contractor without a tender.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for any changes to the UK Public Contract Regulations to be made by primary and not secondary legislation so that citizens, trade unions, stakeholders, MPs and Peers can engage in an open, transparent and consultative process to have the opportunity to scrutinise and amend any changes;
- 2) Campaign with MPs, Peers, TUC and public sector and civil society alliances to make sure that any new UK public procurement regime does not make any public services outsourcing compulsory, or easier to privatise via the use of vehicles such as public service mutual models;
- 3) Campaign for UK public procurement in the EU – UK trade deal to:
  - a) Continue to apply current EU procurement directives, as has been done in an EU trade agreement with Ukraine, but leave room to improve. This would maintain the UK's commitment to the social and environmental provisions in

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

public procurement and strengthen non divergence and regulatory alignment and the "Level Playing Field". It would make it harder to liberalise public services like the NHS in future Free Trade Agreements with the United States;

- b) Include non -regression, dynamic alignment and direct effect clauses that would allow UK employment law to keep pace with improvements in EU social and employment policy linked to the public procurement regime;
- 4) Campaign for any new UK public procurement regime to be maintained as a devolved matter for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- 5) Provide updated public procurement negotiating and bargaining guidance for branches and regions once the new UK public procurement changes have been finalised.

*North Yorkshire*

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### **48. UK Public Procurement Post – EU Exit must protect public services**

Conference notes that with the UK exiting the EU on 31st January 2020 there are now many post EU-Exit legislation changes to be expected that impact on public services.

Conference notes that we are now within an extremely short transition period during which negotiations will take place on the future relationship with the EU. Conference is mindful that with such a short negotiation period a No Deal outcome with the EU is still a real risk.

Conference is very concerned by the UK Government's resistance to any commitments to a 'Level Playing Field' in a future EU - UK Treaty. This poses a real risk of significantly weakening workplace, equality, health and safety, consumer and citizens, environmental and climate change standards, regulations, rights and protections.

Conference notes that this deliberately paves the way for a Free Trade Agreement with the EU so that the government can negotiate more easily a Free Trade Agreement with the US with lower standards, regulations, rights and protections.

Conference notes with particular concern that the UK Government is exploring how potential freedom from the EU procurement regime might allow it to alter public procurement in the UK in the longer term.

Conference notes that privatisation of public services under the EU is not mandatory but that liberalisation is encouraged and is often hard to reverse once in place. The EU Public Procurement Directive, followed and set out in the UK Public Contract Regulations, only set the rules once a public authority has decided to test the market or outsource public services.

The current EU rules, successfully campaigned for by UNISON with EPSU, include the need to consider the 'price quality ratio' in tenders where along with price, social and environmental provisions are considered so that the 'quality' ( e.g. paying the

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living wage, having a gender pay audit, promoting diverse workforce, sustainability service plan etc) of a particular bid could be considered equally alongside price.

The 'price - quality ratio' removed and replaced the MEAT (Most Economic Advantageous Tender) driver that has fuelled the 'race to the bottom' in public procurement and has led to the exploitation of workers' rights across the UK. Conference believes how that the UK has not taken up the opportunities inside existing EU regulations to be more progressive.

Conference notes that public procurement in the UK is a devolved matter and that the Scottish Government has used the new EU regime to introduce social and environment provisions much further and comprehensively than the Westminster Government. Conference recognises the ongoing campaigning work by our members in Northern Ireland to demand that the Ethical Care Charter forms the basis for any procurement of homecare services undertaken by the Health and Social Care Board and Health and Social Care Trusts.

Conference notes that UNISON has been critical of the EU public procurement regime and has campaigned from much more to be done to improve and make mandatory the inclusion of social and environmental provisions in public procurement regulations and stop the 'race to the bottom'. However Conference is very concerned that any erosion of existing standards will only open up our public services to further outsourcing and privatisation.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for any changes to the UK Public Contract Regulations to be made by primary and not secondary legislation so that citizens, trade unions, stakeholders, MP's and Peers can engage in an open, transparent and consultative process to have the opportunity to scrutinise and amend any changes;
- 2) Campaign with MP's, Peers, TUC and public sector and civil society alliances to make sure that any new UK public procurement regime does not make any public services outsourcing compulsory, or easier to privatise via the use of vehicles such as 'public service mutual' models;
- 3) Campaign for UK public procurement in the EU – UK trade deal to:
  - a) Continue to apply current EU procurement directives, as has been done in an EU trade agreement with Ukraine, but leave room to improve. This would maintain the UK's commitment to the social and environmental provisions in public procurement and strengthen non -divergence and regulatory alignment and the 'Level Playing Field'. It would make it harder to liberalise public services like the NHS in future Free Trade Agreements with the Unites States;
  - b) Include 'non -regression', 'dynamic alignment' and 'direct effect' clauses that would allow UK employment law to keep pace with improvements in EU social and employment policy linked to the public procurement regime;
- 4) Campaign in conjunction with the membership in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure that, as public procurement is a devolved matter, no changes

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

can be made to the public procurement regimes unless taken forward by the devolved legislatures or with their consent;

- 5) Provide updated public procurement negotiating and bargaining guidance for branches and regions once the new UK public procurement changes have been finalised.

### ***Ulster Community and Hospitals***

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#### **49. Democratising and Renationalising Public Services**

The 2019 General election campaign highlighted the gulf between Tory and Labour party visions for the NHS.

While the Tory's refused to exclude the NHS from any future trade deal with Donald Trump and US 'Big Pharma/Insurance companies' the Labour Party committed to the reinstating the NHS and renationalising existing privatised services.

The debate also raised the issue of not just what kind of public services we want but how they are organised and made accountable to the wishes of local communities.

Conference believes the neo liberal, top down, centralised systems with internal markets and corporate management structures have failed miserably. The never-ending organisational changes, always introduced with the intention of opening up the public sector to further competition and private sector involvement have resulted in fractured services competing against each other rather than in cooperating together for the benefit of local communities.

The latest Tory reorganisation of NHS and Local Government services under the umbrella of Accountable Care Organisations are accountable to no one and will sit beyond scrutiny by the local communities they serve. They are ripe for privatisation and potential rich pickings for the big business interests the Tory party represents.

Conference therefore resolves to take forward our vision for public services of the future. To roll back the failed policies of corporatisation, commercialisation and privatisation and replace it with a democratically accountable services based on cooperation, workers democracy and public ownership.

### ***Mid Yorkshire Health***

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#### **50. Fighting Local Authority Cuts**

Conference believes that the funding crisis in local government, caused by the austerity policies of the conservative government, has reached a critical level. In towns and cities across the country vital services have been closed and cut back – with no end in sight.

Conference notes with disappointment that it is not only Tory controlled local authorities, but also those with Labour majorities, that are carrying out cuts. Often our union is the last line of defence for workers in local government services and for those who use council services.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

We believe that councils, particularly Labour councils where UNISON may have some influence, should do everything within their power and within the law to avoid making cuts, whilst promoting their actions in the community and building a local campaign. They should also link up with others to develop a national strategy to fight the cuts.

Conference believes that UNISON must be seen to actively oppose austerity driven cuts to services – through public campaigning, lobbying, petitions and through supporting our members who work in these services – whoever is running the council.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council:

- 1) To call on all councils to look at what options they have to generate resources and avoid making cuts – including the use of reserves, capitalising eligible general fund expenditure and using prudential borrowing to generate revenue (such as in those councils which have borrowed to invest in property, using the returns in rents etc. to supplement their revenue budgets);
- 2) To support those councils who take up this option, in developing local campaigns in defence of local authority services;
- 3) To support and promote efforts to link up those councils across the countries of the UK;
- 4) To promote this position at all levels of the union, including within the Labour Link.

***South East Region  
Surrey County***

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### **51. Fighting Local Authority Cuts**

Conference recognises that there were many factors which led to Labour's defeat in the recent general election. One significant factor may have been the role played by Labour councils carrying out austerity-driven cuts to services.

Conference believes that the funding crisis in local government, caused by the austerity policies of the conservative government, has now reached a critical level. In towns and cities across the country vital services have been closed and cut back – with no end in sight.

Conference notes with disappointment that it is not only Tory controlled local authorities, but also those with Labour majorities, that are carrying out cuts. Often our union is the last line of defence for workers in local government services and for those who use council services.

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## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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- 2) To support those councils who take up this option, in developing local campaigns in defence of local authority services;
- 3) To support and promote efforts to link up those councils across the countries of the UK;
- 4) To promote this position at all levels of the union, including within the Labour Link.

***Carmarthenshire County  
Southwark***

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### **52. Campaign Against Local Authority Cuts Includes Borrowing**

Conference notes that according to the Times on 13 February 2020, Spelthorne Council in Surrey, has borrowed £1 billion to invest in commercial property deals. It is also reported that they have an annual budget of only £22 million. The surplus from the rents accrued go into local services.

Conference notes that it would be entirely possible on this basis, for other councils to use their borrowing powers and reserves legally to mitigate against the continuing cuts and austerity imposed on local councils and to continue to meet the needs of the people they represent.

Conference recognises that this would only be a temporary reprieve from the worst excesses imposed by the government and the local labour movement would have to continue to campaign against austerity.

Conference requests that the National Executive Council:

- 1) Publicise to branches that councils have legal borrowing powers and reserves and do not have to make cuts and to work with those branches that wish to put forward alternative proposals to the Tories imposed austerity;
- 2) Work with Labour Link to publicise this and work with them to highlight these powers and the prudential use of reserves amongst those Labour councillors who oppose cuts and that wish to draw up alternative budget plans that protect our members jobs and services;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 3) Continue to oppose austerity and cuts in services and work with other trade unions and campaigning groups in highlighting the effects these cuts have on working people;
- 4) Build support for a national demonstration alongside the TUC other trade unions and the wider labour movement and highlight that there is an alternative to cuts and austerity.

### *Bucks Healthcare and Community*

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#### **53. Combatting the Rise of Volunteerism in Public Services**

Conference notes the rise in the use and acceptance of volunteers in public services at a time when much of government policy mitigates against volunteers including:

- 1) Pension inequality which means women have to work for longer;
- 2) In-work conditionality which means part time workers who may have volunteered are not able to do so;
- 3) Cuts to social care mean more people have caring responsibilities and do not have free time to volunteer;
- 4) Cuts in real wages mean people have to work longer hours and are less able to volunteer;
- 5) Cuts to public transport make volunteers less able to take up voluntary work in rural areas;
- 6) The increase in the pension age means people are having to work longer reducing the availability of older people for volunteering.

Nevertheless, volunteers have been promoted as the solution to the cuts in public services and we see the rise in their use and acceptance in the NHS, Police and local authorities, particularly in libraries.

UNISON accepts that there is a limited place within public services for volunteers to complement statutory services. However, the provision of consistent, high quality public services cannot rely on volunteers and the increasing acceptance of this trend must be challenged. Public services should be delivered by competent, trained, fairly paid professionals.

Conference requires the National Executive Council to:

- a) Publish service group specific guidance on how to challenge commissioners and providers of public services using volunteers to replace public service employers;
- b) Produce a campaign toolkit for branches to challenge the basis for using volunteers to replace employees in public services;
- c) Continue to campaign against austerity and the relentless cuts to public funding which has resulted in the shift of focus from employees to volunteers;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- d) Highlight the benefit of democratic public services which are subject to local accountability and scrutiny.

*UNISON Essex*

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### **54. Health and Social Care Provision for Older People**

Conference recognises that health and social care workers are dedicated and hard working but lowly paid with poor terms and conditions. They do their best to provide quality care but against a background of crisis within health and social care services.

Research confirms care for residents in privately run homes for the elderly can be inadequate due to poor terms and conditions and lack of training. This results in large numbers of vacancies and staff shortages which further affects the quality of care. Care inspectors highlight examples of abuse to residents and inadequate care while the private providers continue to make a substantial profit.

In 2019 the largest commercial provider of residential care went into administration, and many others are struggling as cash strapped local authorities cannot fund adult care adequately, resulting in it not being an economically viable proposition for providers in the private sector. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find residential care for those suffering from even mild dementia or from more challenging conditions.

In a report for the Centre for Policy Studies, Damien Green MP recognised the crisis situation ahead of the government's Green Paper on the Future Funding of Care, which was due out in June 2019 but then delayed. His proposals are said to include that about half the cost of domiciliary and nursing care could be met by the state.

Many of us would have seen the shocking Panorama programme looking at the crisis in social care shown on TV.

The prospect of the promised social care green paper ever being delivered is looking more and more unlikely as time goes by. For over two years now we've been promised action and seen nothing to back that up.

We have an ageing population and it is time to get real. More and more of us will need support when we grow older.

Meanwhile, a report from the County Councils Network (CCN) has predicted that English councils risk insolvency if government does not move rapidly to fill a £50 billion funding black hole opening up in local authority budgets. Without extra funding, the CCN said rising demand for social care will see council finances plunged into disarray and services cut to legal minimum levels. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, spending on adult social care has already fallen by 5 percent in real terms between 2009 – 2018.

To add to the misery, alleged abuse in care homes continues

Private care homes (approximately 80 percent of all social care is delivered by the private sector) often use untrained staff or staff with limited training and the turnover of staff, often poorly paid is high.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

There is often not enough staff to be able to afford the care, dignity and respect to the elderly that they deserve, many of whom have had long working lives since leaving school at 14/15 years of age.

In recent years, changes have been made with the intention to improve social care service for the elderly e.g. personalisation, re-ablement, self-directed support and health and social care integration. However, the focus has been budget management or reduction rather than real improvements. The challenges of these new approaches have been highlighted in those areas where they have been introduced or trialed.

UNISON has recognised the problems and produced Residential Care and Ethical Care Charters. Conference commends those local authorities who have signed up to these Charters but these are too few in number, around 5 percent across the UK.

If we want a health and social care system that meets the needs of older people then public money should be spent on services and invested in staff who provide these services.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council, working through the appropriate UNISON structures to:

- 1) Continue to campaign against privatisation of health and social care for older people;
- 2) Carefully consider any government proposals regarding health and social care and respond to any consultation (if possible within the constraints of deadlines);
- 3) Press for a National Care Service funded from general taxation;
- 4) Work to highlight and challenge practices that are contrary to human rights legislation;
- 5) Further call for the adoption of the principles of UNISON's Ethical Care and Residential Care Charters by all public bodies commissioning or providing health and social care services for older people;
- 6) Work towards achieving at least the living wage for social care staff in all sectors;
- 7) Work towards the adoption of adequate staffing levels and the provision of appropriate training for staff employed in health and social care.

***National Retired Members' Committee***

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### **55. The Crisis in Social Care**

Conference notes that years of chronic underfunding and a dysfunctional market have produced a social care system in which the needs of hundreds of thousands of society's most vulnerable people are not being met and in which care workers are frequently exploited.

Conference is bemused therefore that successive governments seem unwilling or unable to bring much needed reform to the sector, with the promised Green Paper

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

never materialising and the new Conservative government continuing to drag its heels in 2020.

Conference asserts that piecemeal attempts made to prop up the current failing system will not cater adequately for the needs of our growing and ageing population.

Instead, Conference wants to see a more ambitious vision of where social care should be in ten years' time, with serious financial commitments to back this up, and a strict timetable for achieving change.

Conference notes that by the time of the 2019 general election there was a widespread consensus across unions, the Labour Party, health think tanks and cross-party Parliamentary committees in favour of making universal access to personal care free at the point of delivery.

As part of a longer term plan, Conference believes that ultimately the goal should be to bring social care up to equivalent levels of equity and access as those associated with the NHS.

Conference accepts that this would be expensive, but believes that the ongoing failure to invest properly in social care by successive governments is purely a matter of political choice.

Conference is also convinced that providing extra money is only part of the solution – there must be accompanying changes to the way in which care is delivered.

For example, Conference notes the findings of the recent UNISON-supported report from the Centre for Health and the Public Interest, which showed in stark terms how much money bleeds out of the sector into the pockets of private equity barons.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for social care to finally receive the proper funding it deserves and for such funding to be raised by collective rather than individual means;
- 2) For any spending boost to be accompanied by meaningful reform of service delivery to improve the system in the interests of its staff and the service users they care for;
- 3) Social care to remain an organising and recruitment priority for UNISON, complementing the union's high-profile campaigns against injustice, privatisation and underfunding.

***North Yorkshire***

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### **56. Delivering Fair Work in Care in an Unfair Society**

Conference notes that UNISON has well developed policy on not only the challenges facing the care sector. As a sector, the provision of social care has remained underfunded and under resourced. This is true for all countries that make up the UK. The demands on the social care sector continue to grow, which combined with the lack of investment in the service makes it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of service users.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference welcomes the work that UNISON has done to raise the awareness of the reality of the 15 minute visit, travel times and the precarious work within this sector. Conference also draws attention to the organising campaigns that have taken place within the sector to provide higher pay, more regular hours, trade union recognition, parity with health and local government directly provided colleagues. However this group of workers, particularly those who are employed within the community and voluntary sector and the private sector are increasingly in precarious employment situations within work being controlled more and more by digital app-based technology which people are expected to have on their own phones rather than those provided by an employer.

Conference welcomes the payment of the Living Wage to social care workers in Scotland but particularly wants to highlight the findings of the Scottish Government Fair Work Conventions Inquiry into social care that many social care providers do not currently deliver fair work and the ability to do this is made more difficult by both the existing funding and commissioning systems and the lack of sectorial bargaining.

Conference believes that free care for all is a principal that the NHS and Social care was founded on and that this is slowly being whittled away. We believe that staff supporting service users with continuing health and social care needs working in the 3rd and private sector require similar terms and conditions to those in the health sector, recognising their hard work and dedication.

Conference condemns the announcement by the Home Office in February 2020 of its proposed points based immigration system which fails to recognise the shortfall in the current social care workforce and the fact that no matter how quickly the digital revolutions can happen, this is a role that will never be able to be provided by a machine. Care workers, are highly skilled individuals with growing levels of qualifications and training but they are low paid. Removing the option of migrant workers being able to work in care will increase yet more demands on an already buckling service.

Conference also notes that the structures of UNISON have not kept up with the changes to employment, particularly within the Social Care setting. Care staff are currently placed in Local Government, Health and Community branches, with the only place which is able to have a joined up discussion about social care being the already packed agenda at National Delegate Conference. There needs to be proper consideration given to the needs of this group of staff and how they are organised within UNISON.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop an evidence based approach to justify why care workers deserve to be paid at rates of pay higher than the Living Wage;
- 2) Review and update the Ethical Care Charter to ensure that all care workers receive the necessary training and development which challenge the perception that care is a low skilled job;
- 3) Continue to challenge the UK Government on their points based immigration system which designates the provision of care as low skilled;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 4) Work with Service Groups, Regions and Self Organised Groups to review how UNISON organises within social care with a report back to National Delegate Conference in 2021.

*Lanarkshire Health*

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### **57. Organising to End the Crisis in Social Care**

Conference notes the launch of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry into the Professionalisation of Social Care Workers and the publication in July 2019 of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee report on Social Care Funding “Time to end a national scandal” which highlighted that adult social care in England continues to be inadequately funded.

The report noted that 1.4 million older people had an unmet care need in 2018; that the number of older people and working-age adults requiring care is increasing rapidly, and public funding is not only not keeping pace, but has declined in real terms by 13 percent between 2009/10 and 2015/16.

The Lords Economic Affairs Committee’s report importantly also urged the government to provide an immediate £8 billion cash injection and reform the provision of care, including by giving free personal care to people who need it.

Conference further notes that in its November 2019 report entitled “Ethical Care: A Bold Reform Agenda for Adult Social Care”, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) described social care as “the ultimate Cinderella service”.

The report identifies that since 2008/09, there has been a 5 percent reduction in the number of people receiving publicly funded social care per year. Over the period since then, this equates to around 600,000 people. This has occurred despite a significant increase in the number of people in need of care.

Again, according to a 2018 Age UK report, there were 1.4 million people over the age of 65 who had unmet social care needs. More than double the number in 2010.

More than one in five care providers – looking after over 200,000 people – are currently failing to meet the Care Quality Commission’s quality and safety standards. This grows to one in three when we consider nursing homes.

Additionally, according to the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), two-thirds of councils reported that they had at least one care provider that had closed, ceased trading or ‘handed back’ contracts in their area within a six-month period in 2019.

The IPPR’s report highlights that the “the impact of the cuts to social care are felt particularly strongly among the workforce. Nearly half the staff in the sector are paid below the living wage – with large numbers also paid below the minimum wage.” The report goes on to say that staff “retention is poor and turnover is high, with around one-third of the workforce leaving in any one year. This is leading to significant unfilled staffing gaps, which are due to grow from 78,000 today (November 2019) to 350,000 by 2028 – or 400,000 if freedom of movement comes to an end.”

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference welcomes the fact that these reports share many of UNISON's concerns and reflects our union's national policy and campaigning agenda. In particular, that increased funding for adult social care should provide for a higher paid workforce and one that benefits from investment in development and training and ultimately effective collective sectoral bargaining machinery.

In his first speech as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson promised to "fix this crisis in social care once and for all." We are yet to see any significant action taken to fulfil this commitment.

Conference further welcomes notes the work being undertaken within and by UNISON to tackle this problem.

In May 2019, UNISON was granted permission by the Supreme Court to appeal the Court of Appeal ruling in the Royal Mencap Society v Tomlinson-Blake case, which had declared that care workers were not entitled to the National Living Wage for so-called "sleep-in" shifts.

On the political front, UNISON contributed to the Labour Party manifesto for the December 2019 General Election, which contained the promise of free personal care for older people.

Beyond this, we have seen tremendous organising drives such as UNISON North West's "Care Workers for Change" campaign, which was not only successful in preventing a number of local authorities from taking advantage of the Court of Appeal's Tomlinson-Blake judgement to reduce sleep-in payments, but also led to a growth in social care membership and the securing of recognition and collective bargaining agreements with a number of employers.

Conference believes that we need to build on the work undertaken by UNISON North West and ensure that our legal and political efforts are combined with an effective national organising strategy for social care.

We believe that the single most effective way for our union to ensure sustainable improvements in social care, both for those who deliver and receive it, is to build workplace organisation across the sector.

Only an organised social care workforce can deliver sustainable change regardless of who is in power at a local and national level.

Only an organised social care workforce can ensure compliance with any improvements in commissioning and procurement.

Only an organised social care workforce can challenge poor practice without fear of reprisals.

Only an organised social care workforce can stand proudly and openly alongside others campaigning for dignity.

Only an organised social care workforce can enforce sectoral collective bargaining.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Only with an organised social care workforce can we provide the ground troops necessary for the fight for public ownership and delivery of social care.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders to campaign for a social care system that is publicly delivered, free at the point of need and paid for by universal progressive taxation;
- 2) Work with Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders to demand the requisite resources to properly resource a national social care organising campaign aimed at not only recruiting social care workers into UNISON, but doing so in way designed to empower those workers to realise their collective strength;
- 3) Work with Service Groups, Labour Link and other stakeholders including by lobbying political parties in positions of power and influence in Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland to continue to highlight the gross under-funding of adult social care and the impact this has on society.

***Salford City***

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### **58. Motion for Free Care for all Ages and Appropriate Remuneration to Attract Staff**

Conference recognises the crisis in social care and the difficult conditions that our members are working in to provide care to individuals with complex health and social care needs.

Tens of thousands of people have died waiting for a care package to be put in place and it is estimated that there are over a million people in the UK with an unmet care need.

While we welcome the commitments to free care for those over 65 years of age, we believe that care should be free to all regardless of age. Around 50 percent of people needing care are under 50 years of age, following an accident, illness or disability. Care workers are aware of the anxiety caused to people having to pay for their care if their total assets are over £14,000 including any equity in their property, savings and their pension fund.

Councils are under pressure to drive down care costs and NHS continuing healthcare funding is difficult to obtain despite people having high health needs. Many of the organisations that provide care services are charities, housing associations or not for profit providers.

Care workers are working in a highly pressured environment which is understaffed and underfunded. Often care homes have vacancy rates of over 75 percent.

Care workers are usually paid around the minimum wage with only minimum statutory employment entitlements. Most care workers do not receive enhanced rates for unsocial hours, weekends or night shifts. This undoubtedly has an affect on

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

the recruitment and retention of staff within this sector and encourages the growth of agency work in this area.

Conference recognises that the responsibilities of care workers are underestimated, and these responsibilities often increase during unsocial hours due to the increase in lone working and support being provided by one On-call manager who may cover many counties and hundreds of people needing care.

Conference believes that free care for all is a principal that the NHS and social care was founded on and that this is slowly being whittled away. We believe that staff supporting clients with continuing health and social care needs working in the third and private sector require similar terms and conditions to those in the health sector, recognising their hard work and dedication.

We ask Conference to support and to work alongside Labour Link and other trade unions to develop:

- 1) A union campaign for all health and social care workers to be entitled to unsocial hours payments and terms and conditions that reflect the work that they undertake;
- 2) To highlight that care is currently not free for all and to campaign for care to be free to all who need it, regardless of age;
- 3) To identify how care can be funded nationally through central government, to reduce the inequalities in care services and prevent postcode lotteries.

### ***Bucks Healthcare and Community***

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#### **59. Grenfell Tower Inquiry**

Conference condemns the attacks in the media on London Fire Brigade staff after the publication of the interim findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Conference believes that the inquiry should have looked at the causes of the fire first and what happened on the day in the second phase as this lets those responsible for the tragedy off the hook and puts the focus unfairly on the London Fire Brigade and its staff.

Conference believes that no-one would have died if inflammable cladding had not been fitting to the building and if the correct fire safety measures had been in place. Deregulation, outsourcing of council housing and cuts in the fire service lie behind the tragedy. Warnings from previous fires were ignored.

Conference believes that the government must now take responsibility for ensuring that recommendations from the inquiry are applied nationwide. A real change in fire safety in the UK can only be achieved by establishing a new, credible and accountable body responsible for fire and rescue service policy in the UK.

Conference believes that prevention of another Grenfell Tower fire means a reversal of cuts to the fire service an end to the neo-liberal belief that fire safety measures are just “red tape”.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference is concerned at the high level of jobs losses amongst Fire and Rescue Staff, include Fire Safety workers, since 2008 many of whom were UNISON members.

Conference supports the following measures:

- 1) Full funding for the Fire Service nationally, including increases in the number of fire safety inspecting officers and support staff;
- 2) Proper professional training for fire safety inspecting officers and fire fighters and for an end to the provision of fire service training at a profit;
- 3) A reversal of cuts to local authority building control departments;
- 4) An end to the outsourcing of building control responsibilities to private “approved inspectors”;
- 5) Extending of current fire safety legislation to cover all parts of high rise residential buildings and not just the common parts;
- 6) Provision of sufficient resources to make it possible for local authorities to ensure that new buildings are actually constructed and alterations made in line with council and fire authority recommendations;
- 7) Legislation to make the installation of sprinklers in all existing and newly built high rise residential buildings and schools compulsory;
- 8) Closure of loopholes which allow technical fire safety elements to be designed without the involvement of competent fire safety professionals;
- 9) Legislation and adequate funding to ensure the removal of all of inflammable cladding from high rise residential buildings and prevent its installation in the future.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to work with Labour Link to raise these proposals within the Labour Party and suggest that they are included in the manifesto for the next General Election.

Conference resolves to continue to support the Grenfell survivors’ fight for justice.

***Greater London Region  
London Fire Brigade***

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- 8) Closure of loopholes which allow technical fire safety elements to be designed without the involvement of competent fire safety professionals;
- 9) Legislation and adequate funding to ensure the removal of all of inflammable cladding from high rise residential buildings and prevent its installation in the future.

*Lambeth*

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### **61. The UK Government’s First Homes Scheme will lead to less Social and Affordable Housing**

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference notes the UK government consultation which opened on 7 February 2020 over the new First Homes housing policy. This proposal seeks to divert Section 106 funds away from the provision of affordable homes and instead use it to offer discounts on new properties for purchase in England.

Conference notes that opposition to these proposals and its effects on building genuinely affordable and social rental homes has already been expressed by a wide cross-section of organisations including the Chartered Institute for Housing, National Housing Federation, Shelter and the Local Government Association.

Conference is concerned that the impact of these proposals would be to reduce the numbers of low cost social and affordable rental properties provided by housing associations and local authorities.

Conference is also concerned that like the Help to Buy scheme, the proposed policy will inflate sale prices at the expense of increasing supply. It will also likely help those on very high incomes who are not in housing need. According to the National Audit Office, 65,000 Help to Buy buyers, 31 percent of buyers, did not need the help of the scheme to get onto the housing ladder.

Furthermore, these proposals would hand over decision-making powers on the development of affordable homes to large house-building corporations, while restricting the ability of local authorities to use their planning policies to insist on genuinely affordable and social rented homes. We also believe that there are deep flaws in the implementation and legal enforcement of these proposals that could be exploited by large house-building corporations.

Conference believes that the First Homes policy will damage the social housing sector and further endanger jobs, pay and conditions within the sector. Section 106 monies, though far from the ideal arrangement, are currently the predominant way to fund new affordable housing since the government slashed grants for social housing in 2010. This policy will see this money going to house builders and not to providers of affordable housing such as housing associations and local authorities.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Add our voice to the wide range of those opposing these plans as they currently stand, highlighting the threat the proposals pose to ensuring our housing associations and local authorities can continue to expand the provision of affordable homes in the country;
- 2) Work with Labour Link to raise this issue with MPs and councillors to ensure their voices are also used to stop this damaging policy whether in the consultation or if a Bill is presented to Parliament;
- 3) Continue our commitment to support real radical changes within this sector which would see funding for the construction of a new generation of social housing fit to meet the needs of the whole country; and promote UNISON's Housing Manifesto: "Safe, decent and affordable homes for all".

***Housing Associations***

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### **62. Private Renters Deserve the Right to a Secure, Decent and Affordable Home**

Conference, more and more of our members are forced to live in the Private Rented Sector due to the unaffordability of home-ownership and inaccessibility of social housing.

This is due to failed housing policies and government cuts, which have inflated house prices and rents and led to a drastic decline in social housing.

In England and Wales, there's been an increase in the numbers of people, particularly the young under 40, who privately rent. They face high rents, poor quality housing and insecurity, as well as the threat of eviction hanging over their heads.

Private landlords can evict private tenants without giving them a reason by simply issuing a two-month notice after their fixed term tenancy ends under Section 21 no-fault evictions, with renters powerless to fight against this. This policy is one of the biggest causes of homelessness in the country, and one UNISON has consistently opposed.

Many private renters on modest incomes cannot afford skyrocket rents or pay for improvements to make homes safe. Recent research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that private renters have the highest poverty rates in Wales and the North East, due to a plethora of factors, including high rents and low income.

Conference, our members deserve the right to a safe, secure, decent and affordable home where they can live and thrive.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for Section 21 no-fault evictions to be abolished to protect tenants from unfair, unnecessary evictions;
- 2) Campaign for the introduction of new legislation to create secure, permanent tenancies in line with Scotland;
- 3) Campaign for a fair rent system or rent controls to protect private tenants from unpredictable, extortionate rent increases;
- 4) Campaign for all councils to be allowed to introduce borough wide licensing schemes setting out minimum standards of landlord accreditation to deter rogue landlords and drive up standards in private renting;
- 5) Call for councils to be supported with adequate funding to increase staffing levels in environmental health, trading standards, tenancy relations and other roles, which are needed to provide effective regulation and enforcement in the Private Rented Sector;
- 6) Campaign for more council and social rented homes to help make housing more affordable and to provide alternative accommodation for private renters.

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Conference further calls upon the National Executive Council to work with appropriate bodies, including Generation Rent, to raise awareness of issues such as affordability, insecurity, poverty and homelessness blighting the experience of private renters across the country.

*West Midlands Community*

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### Health

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#### **63. Mobilising Members in Defence of the NHS**

Conference notes the increase in privatisation in the English NHS over the past decade, particularly since the disastrous Health and Social Care Act became law in 2012. Privatisation is present in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland too but considerably less due to political and industrial campaigning by unions. Cuts too are damaging the NHS across all the UK with waiting lists up, accident and emergency waiting times up and staff vacancies up.

As a result, Conference notes that a record £9 billion of the NHS budget went to profit-making companies in 2018-19, that ambulance trusts spent £92 million on private ambulances and taxis in the same year, and that nearly a third of all spending on mental health services goes to private providers.

Conference further notes the ongoing toxic legacy of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) that has left many NHS bodies saddled with debts for many years to come, and Conference is alarmed at the ongoing attempts of English Trusts to establish subsidiary companies to deliver services in the face of massive opposition from staff.

Conference reasserts its belief that privatisation is deeply damaging both for staff who find themselves working outside the NHS but also for the delivery of services to the public.

Conference reiterates UNISON policy to continue resisting privatisation in all its forms, but also to bring former NHS services back in-house.

Conference also congratulates the union on its many successful campaigns to fight privatisation at national, regional and branch level in recent years, particularly those to fight off the use of subsidiary companies and influence exerted on devolved administrations.

Conference believes that this work can be strengthened further by recognising the power that UNISON's wider membership of more than 1.3 million people can wield.

Conference notes that under the current English NHS market system patients may be sent to private providers for treatment without being given a meaningful say in such decisions or even realising that their care is being carried out by non-NHS providers. For the NHS to be more than a brand people need to be clear who is providing the service.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue union campaigns to resist NHS privatisation in all its forms across the UK;

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) Work to raise awareness among UNISON members (of all service groups) about the dynamics of privatisation when they and their families use the services;
- 3) Highlight the positive role that UNISON members can play as citizens in seeking to defend the NHS;
- 4) Campaign for the insourcing of all NHS services previously outsourced;
- 5) Work with sympathetic campaign groups and alliances.

***National Executive Council***

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### **64. Fighting Privatisation and Subsidiary Companies in the NHS**

Conference regrets that the NHS in England remains under frequent attack from the Tory government – due to both underfunding and various forms of privatisation.

Conference notes that since the Tories brought in the Health and Social Care Act in 2012 there has been an increase in privatisation in England: according to the government's own figures, more than £9 billion of the NHS budget went to profit-making companies in 2018-2019.

Conference also notes that some areas of the NHS are particularly susceptible to privatisation: for example, ambulance trusts in England spent £92 million on private ambulances and taxis in 2018/19, and nearly half of all spending on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services now goes to private providers.

Conference is concerned that the Tories have also presided over the recent expansion in subsidiary companies being set up by NHS Trusts to deliver services. They are already prevalent in local government and higher education.

Conference notes that this phenomenon has arisen from trusts seeking to exploit the tax loophole that allows them to claim back VAT when using separate companies to take on the running of services such as estates and facilities management.

Conference recognises that such developments have often been driven by austerity and the intense financial pressure that trusts are under, but Conference asserts that such an approach is deeply counter-productive, as well as damaging for staff and the essential services they provide to citizens.

Conference reasserts UNISON's belief that the NHS always functions best as one team, with all staff able to pull together in the same direction, rather than being splintered off into separate organisations.

Conference notes recent ComRes polling for UNISON which showed that just a third of the public think transferring NHS staff to private companies is acceptable, with half of those polled fearing that the efficiency of the NHS could be undermined as a direct result of non-clinical health staff such as cleaners, porters and catering workers being outsourced.

Conference welcomes the strength of UNISON campaigning against subsidiary companies and congratulates the growing number of branches that have fought off

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

such threats, using a combination of industrial action, media and political campaigning – with strong backing from regional offices and the UNISON Centre.

At the wider level, Conference congratulates the union on fighting to turn the consensus against privatisation – to the extent that even the Tories went into the 2019 election promising to rid the NHS of much of the damaging market created by their own 2012 legislation.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to fight NHS privatisation in all its forms;
- 2) Campaign in Parliament and beyond for legislative change that moves the NHS away from the market;
- 3) Continue to resist the establishment of subsidiary companies across the NHS and campaign to insource existing subcos.

### ***East Midlands Region***

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#### **65. Scrap the WOS! No to Wholly Owned Subsidiary Companies**

Conference notes the increasingly widespread phenomenon of wholly owned subsidiary companies being established across a range of public services including local government, higher education and the NHS.

Such developments have often been driven by austerity and the need for councils, universities or hospital trusts to cut costs. However, Conference asserts that such an approach is deeply counter-productive, as well as damaging for staff and the essential services they provide to citizens.

Employers have tried to argue that these changes are essentially benign, but Conference is clear that these are a form of backdoor privatisation of public services.

Conference notes that in recent years there has been a particular use of subsidiary companies in the English NHS, where trusts seek to exploit the tax loophole that allows them to claim back potentially millions of pounds of VAT when using separate companies to take on the running of services such as estates and facilities management.

Conference is alarmed that such moves also generally seek to make savings off the backs of workers by removing them from national bargaining arrangements, establishing two-tier workforces, and denying access to pension schemes. In the NHS this most commonly sees new starters not being employed on Agenda for Change terms, instead receiving inferior terms and conditions to directly employed NHS staff and those staff transferred to new subsidiaries.

Conference is also deeply fearful of the impact of such developments in fragmenting our public services. The NHS always functions best when all parts of the service are pulling together in the same direction rather than atomised into competing units or with staff broken away from the rest of the healthcare team.

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Conference welcomes the strength of UNISON campaigning against subsidiary companies and congratulates those branches that have fought off such threats, using a combination of industrial action, media and political campaigning.

Conference particularly congratulates Bradford Health Services branch and Frimley Health branch for their extensive and high profile campaigns against the establishment of subsidiary companies in 2019.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue working with service groups, UNISON Labour Link, and all appropriate parts of the union, to fight the creation of wholly owned subsidiary companies that damage both staff and services;
- 2) Campaign at a national level to both:
  - a) Close the VAT tax loophole used to justify the establishment of Wholly Owned Subsidiaries;
  - b) Ensure that national bodies and applicable regulators take a tougher line on those NHS trusts, or other public sector bodies, looking to establish subsidiaries. This may be achieved by negotiating rigorous guidance surrounding their use;
- 3) Campaign for legislation which would end the ability of employers to utilise two (or multi)-tier workforces;
- 4) Continue to support those branches and regions engaged in campaigns to resist the imposition of subsidiaries;
- 5) Establish new networks and national forums, within the applicable Service Group structure, for workers employed by Wholly Owned Subsidiaries;
- 6) Develop a national campaign, and produce appropriate tools and resources, calling for existing Wholly Owned Subsidiaries to be insourced.

*Isle of Wight*

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### **66. Subsidiary Companies in the NHS**

Conference is dismayed by the widespread establishment of wholly owned subsidiary companies (SubCos) across the English NHS.

Conference notes that this phenomenon has arisen from Trusts seeking to exploit the tax loophole that allows them to claim back VAT when using separate companies to take on the running of services such as estates and facilities management.

However, Conference welcomes the strength of UNISON campaigning against subsidiary companies and congratulates the growing number of branches that have fought off such threats, using a combination of industrial action, media and political campaigning – at local, regional and national level.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference asserts that the union is able to win these disputes because the use of SubCos is potentially damaging for both the staff affected and the NHS as a whole.

Conference remains alarmed that the use of SubCos generally involves trusts aiming to make savings off the backs of those working in the NHS by bringing about two-tier workforces in which new starters may find themselves on inferior terms and conditions to those staff transferred to new subsidiaries.

Conference reasserts UNISON's belief that the NHS always functions best as one team, with all staff able to pull together in the same direction to deliver for patients, rather than being splintered off into separate organisations.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to fight moves to establish wholly owned subsidiary companies across the NHS;
- 2) Campaign for existing SubCos to be brought back into the NHS;
- 3) Highlight the importance of maintaining a unified NHS team in the interests of both staff and patients.

***Leeds and York Community Health  
Northumberland Tyne and Wear Health***

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### **67. Campaigning Against Toxic NHS PFI Legacy**

The respected think-tank Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), in autumn 2019, produced a headline "Hospital face "£80 billion bill due to toxic PFI Legacy" with a report detailing:

- 1) The health service faces a PFI "postcode lottery" as some trusts are faced to spend up to £1 in every £6 on PFI payments with worrying consequences for patient safety;
- 2) As a result, long term investment in buildings and life saving technology has been restricted with safety hazards, sewage leaks and falling ceilings now major risks at hospitals.

In 2019 – PFI schemes to fund capital spending will cost trusts £2.1 billion in repayments this year rising to more than £2.5 billion in 2030, thereby diverting funds away from patient services.

In some cases, health trusts have to re-allocate long term capital funding and investments to patch up day to day running costs. The IPPR said there are £3bn of critical maintenance issues unresolved, including fire hazards, sewage leaks and falling ceilings.

Even at NHSSC depots, spending on building maintenance etc. has been kept to a minimum during the Tory governments from 2010. Several of the depots now having to undergo extensive serious maintenance programmes to bring in line with Health and Safety legalisation.

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference call on the National Executive Council to:

- a) To highlight these gross PFI repayments/ percentages and how they are undermining the funding of the NHS;
- b) Ask the National Executive Council Campaign and the Labour Link Committee:
  - i) Campaign for NHS PFI contracts to be scrapped;
  - ii) Campaign for PFI debts to be written off;
  - iii) To campaign for a change in the law to enable these measures if such a legal and/or technical requirement is needed.
- c) To write to UNISON Branch Secretaries in PFI hospitals seeking information where PFI payments have resulted in understaffing, Health and Staffing issues, restructuring, staff levels/grading, redundancies in areas such as accident and emergency, community nursing and surgeries.

***NHS Logistics***

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- 1) The health service faces a PFI “postcode lottery” as some trusts are forced to spend up to £1 in every £6 on PFI payments with worrying consequences for patient safety;
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## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

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- c) To write to UNISON Branch Secretaries in PFI hospitals seeking information where PFI payments have resulted in understaffing, Health and Safety issues, restructuring, reduced staff levels/grading, redundancies in areas such as Accident and Emergency, community nursing and surgeries.

*Nottingham City*

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### **69. NHS Infrastructure – Crumbling Hospitals**

Conference notes with alarm the ongoing funding crisis created by more than a decade of savage Tory austerity cuts.

A recent investigation by the Yorkshire Post revealed that hospitals across Yorkshire and Humberside face a mounting £700 million bill to deal with a huge backlog of repairs dating back many years.

Official figures show that more than £50 million is needed for immediate high-risk problems to prevent “catastrophic failure”, major disruption to hospital services and to tackle safety concerns. That is why hospital bosses are calling on Ministers to commit to long term investment. The NHS backlog maintenance bill is now £6.5 billion in England, around half of which is safety critical.

This is an issue which threatens the health and wellbeing of all UNISON members and the communities they support. We must now hold the government to account over the false promises it made during the election about supporting public services and over investment in the areas the Tories have left without funding for ten long years.

Conference calls on UNISON to campaign within communities to increase the pressure on the government to provide our NHS with the capital funding needed to restore our crumbling hospitals, and to ensure that “new” money is made available for infrastructure, in order that Trusts are not left to literally “paper over the cracks” within existing budgets or forced to set up subsidiary companies to fund repairs by avoiding tax.

*Leeds and York Community Health*

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### **70. Mental Health Crisis**

Conference notes that there is a crisis in mental health care across the UK and a major factor contributing to this, is the lack of mental health beds. The Guardian in November 2019 noted the following.

“The number of NHS mental health beds in England has fallen by 73 percent from 67,100 in 1987-88 to just 18,400”.

This has caused a crisis where many people who should be in hospital as a last resort are being left in the community or inappropriate settings.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

This is so serious that many people in England and Wales where two doctors and approved mental health professional have decided to detain a person in hospital in the interests of the patient's health safety or with a view of protection to others there is not a hospital bed available. The process therefore cannot be completed. This puts pressure on families. Those suffering mental distress are being left in the community and in inappropriate settings.

Conference believes that UNISON members' health and safety are being put at risk as any serious incident that happens because of lack of resources can be focused on the individual worker who can be blamed, or be left much traumatised seeing a patient they work with end up possibly seriously injured or dead because of lack of bed. There have been a number of cases where this has led to death of a patient and members of the public.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to organise a national campaign about the bed crisis. This should highlight that after an assessment under the Mental Health Act a bed should be found immediately. By not finding a bed this questions the principle of the law under s140 Mental Health Act where the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) should provide a bed.

As part of that campaign, we must demand that more resources are found immediately to fund more hospital beds.

Conference further calls upon the National Executive Council to support efforts to organise meetings to look coordinate affected members across England and Wales to determine what actions could be taken as part of this campaign.

*Salford City*

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Education

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### **71. End the Tory Cuts to our Education System**

Education is the lifeblood of a fair and successful society. It is an engine of economic success and a vehicle for tackling inequality and delivering social justice. However, since 2010, Tory funding cuts and policy decisions have decimated the education sector. Their blind pursuit of political ideology and dogma has led to the breaking up of our education systems.

Since 2010, real terms cuts in school funding across the UK has led to significant job losses and outsourcing of support services. A UNISON Scotland study showed that around 20 percent of support staff jobs have gone since 2010, whilst in England there have been cuts of around ten percent in Teaching Assistants since 2013. Job cuts have also hit Cymru/ Wales and Northern Ireland with negative impact on school staff moral. Remaining staff have a greatly increased workload and an expanded range of duties to perform. A UNISON survey of school office staff – a shockingly undervalued group - reported that 87 percent were concerned at their increased workload.

Further education has seen even more disruption. As the so-called Cinderella of Education, it is subject to less public scrutiny and Tory ministers often have little knowledge of the sector. Constant reorganisation and the heaviest funding cuts in

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

education have taken their toll, with widespread job losses and course closures. The removal of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) hit participation rates in the sector and the ending of the NHS bursary is on course to do the same for the training of nursing and allied health professionals;

Higher Education also suffers from weak governance, which has seen huge increases in Vice Chancellor and senior manager pay, whilst the majority of staff have had low pay rises. Recent changes in legislation in Scotland has enshrined the role of Trade Union representatives, election of Chairs and increased student representation on governing boards are an example of good practice that should be extended to other parts of the UK.

Conference welcomes the Labour Party policy in its 2019 manifesto for a new National Education Service in England, that would provide a cradle to grave opportunity for equal access to education – particularly relevant given UNISON's 2019 early years survey which said 40 percent of branches said they had school nurseries facing closure and how per pupil funding for 16/17 year olds has been frozen since 2013 resulting in cuts to courses and student support. However, Conference notes that we still have a Tory government and urgently need additional funding in order to deliver the world class education system our young people need.

In light of the above, Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for:
  - a) Increased education funding, particularly in early years and halt the closure of children's centres;
  - b) An end to the academies and free school programmes with a move back to a coherent local education system and national education services appropriate to each UK country;
  - c) The abolition of grammar schools and of charitable status for private schools;
  - d) An end to the low pay and low status culture for school support staff;
  - e) An end to outsourcing of education services;
  - f) A face to face independent and impartial careers advice and guidance service;
  - g) Restoration of the Education Maintenance Allowance, the NHS bursary and fully funded disabled student allowance;
- 2) No further restructuring or new types of education establishment and a period of stability in education policy;
- 3) Work with service groups to promote school support staff negotiating bodies to negotiate pay and conditions as appropriate to each UK country;
- 4) Work with the political funds, other unions and the WTUC, STUC and ICTU to fight for a democratically accountable, publicly funded, comprehensive education system.

# 2020 National Delegate Conference

## UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

*North Yorkshire*

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### Pensions

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#### **72. Stop the Increases in State Pension Age**

Conference notes that the state pension age is rising, for both men and women. From December 2018, the state pension age rose for both men and women, until it reaches 66 in October 2020. It is then due to rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028, and then rise to 68 between 2037 and 2039. The rise in the pension age comes with constant attack on our pension schemes such as the Self-Administered Trusts (SAT's), Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) present in UK Universities.

The government stated in 2017 that in order to keep the state pension sustainable and maintain fairness between generations in the future, the government would aim for up to 32 percent as the right proportion of adult life to spend in receipt of state pension. A 32 percent timetable is consistent with the average proportion of adult life spent above state pension age experienced by people over the last 25 years.

In 1948, a 65 year old could expect to spend 13.5 years in receipt of the state pension. In 2017, a 65-year-old could expect to live for another 22.8 years, or 33 percent of their adult life. Life expectancy in the UK did not improve between 2015 and 2017. Women's' life expectancy from birth remains 82.9 years and for men it is 79.2 years, the figures from the ONS, published in 2018, show. In some parts of the UK, life expectancy has even decreased.

The Independent Review of the State Pension Age: Final Report published in 2017 stated: "Carers and people with ill health or disability are likely to find it more difficult to continue working up to state pension age. These groups, along with the self-employed, Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and women, are likely to have lower private pension savings which may reduce their ability to cope with state pension age changes". It stated "the age of carers is likely to get older. Current data shows that the age groups most likely to be caring are between the ages of 45–64. Whilst a later state pension age can be mitigated by longer working, the two objectives of unpaid caring, and longer working are not easy to reconcile. It is the same group of people, at the same age, needing to allocate their time in two different ways. This is already a major social policy issue. By the late 2030's it will be a much bigger issue. Of all the changes between now and then relevant to the setting of the state pension age, the Review considers this to be the most significant. Carers cannot easily work and care. Waiting longer for the state pension is a major concern for them."

The TUC cited analysis showing that up to a third of older people from manual occupations who are economically inactive ahead of retirement cite sickness or disability as the reason. There are about 3.6 million people out of work (economically inactive and unemployed) between the ages 50–64, 1.2 million people were out of work because of ill health. For people aged between 50 and 64, the employment rate for disabled people is 42 percent compared with 81 percent for non-disabled people.

ONS data for England and Wales shows that for both men and women, those in professional occupations have the highest average life expectancy at 65, while those

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

in routine occupations have the lowest, with a difference of 3.9 and 3.1 years for men and women in 2007–2011.

Healthy life expectancy has improved proportionately to life expectancy but there is still a substantial gap in healthy life expectancy across areas within the UK. Gaps are most pronounced between the least and most deprived areas within each constituent country.

A core principle of the state pension age is that people be given at least ten years' notice of any changes to their state pension age. The Pensions Commission recommended 15 years notice should be the gold standard. Individuals are likely to feel the effects of uncertainty around their state pension age sharply, as recent experience with the equalisation of the women's pension age with relatively little notice demonstrates. With this in mind, it is too late to stop the increase in the state pension age to 66, in October 2020.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to campaign for the ending of the planned rises in state pension age to 67 between 2026 and 2026, and 68 between 2037 and 2039.

*Swansea University*

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### Environment

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#### **73. Green UNISON and the Climate Emergency**

From floods in Yorkshire to fires in Australia, Conference recognises the rising concern and horror that governments across the world are failing to tackle climate change and pollution. President Donald Trump has withdrawn the USA from the Paris agreement, ignoring the advice of the vast majority of scientists and the United Nations. It has become clear that a private sector led and voluntary approach is failing, so public services and governments must take the lead, otherwise targets will be missed. The target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 is the current UK statutory target set by the Westminster Parliament (and 2045 by the Scottish Parliament). The next decade is critical which is why some organisations, including UNISON, campaign for a target of reaching net zero by at least 2030. We are a long way from putting the measures in place to achieve this and this is deeply concerning to Conference. The shift to net zero must be as soon as required to limit global heating increase to 1.5 percent. The measures required are significant and would need huge levels of additional investment and change in society, both of which UNISON would support.

Over 250 Councils across the UK have declared a climate emergency and want to move faster to decarbonise. Conference therefore declares a climate emergency like other public bodies and organisations have done in the last year.

Public services themselves are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, for example the NHS is responsible for about 5 percent of UK emissions. Significant additional investment is required in public buildings and the energy systems within them. If this new investment is not made available the requirement to hit net zero will be missed or public services will be massively impacted and service provision reduced.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference applauds the striking school children across the world for raising the issue of climate change last year and this year. On Friday 20 September 2019 UNISON members joined them in public and workplace protests and activities responding to a call from Greta Thunberg for adults to join.

Raising public awareness of climate change and its harmful consequences is critical as is winning hearts and minds for the challenges ahead.

The well supported UNISON Green week last September promisingly saw a revival of workplace interest with environment reps being elected locally and renewed engagement with employers. Some employers released staff to attend protests and other activities and have set up projects to green their operations and reduce their emissions with local union involvement.

UNISON Scotland and their green activist network should be an example other Regions could follow and the Scottish TUC have worked closely with the school student protest movement too.

Conference applauds UNISON pension fund representatives who are already advancing arguments for sustainable investments and are beginning to see the results of this work as schemes start to change their investment strategies.

Conference notes that the climate emergency as a trade union issue has been recognised by the National Executive Council in the revised annual objectives.

The next major international climate change summit (known as COP 26) will be in Glasgow in November 2020 and already groups from around the UK, and indeed the world, are preparing to protest and lobby for action.

Conference recognises that post EU exit, environmental regulations and standards will be key part of the future UK relationship with the EU and also future trade agreements with other countries across the globe including especially the USA.

Conference further recognises the breadth of membership across public services who directly or indirectly work to save and improve our environment and also see the effects of climate change. Members in Water, Environment Agencies, Transport, Police, Fire and Rescue are having to respond to issues caused extreme weather conditions.

Conference welcomes and continues to express support for our members in the energy service group and their campaigns to bring forward practical solutions to address greenhouse gas emissions. These campaigns have gained traction and include our calls for a plan improving insulation and energy efficiency in UK homes, fair energy bills for households, public ownership of supply and the development of hydrogen technology to help the UK meet our targets.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Publish a report on how UK public services and workplaces can meet net zero emissions targets and the level of new investment required;

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) Use the findings of this report to assist service groups with employer engagement, and campaigning for investment which does not lead to negative consequences for public service workers and users;
- 3) Engage with Councils in their wider responsibilities for the environment and support them to expand affordable public transport;
- 4) Promote public ownership and intervention to secure a shift towards a sustainable economy and society;
- 5) Work with the TUC and other unions to ensure a proper energy policy and a Just Transition for all workers in energy and energy intensive industries and create one million new green jobs;
- 6) Establish a UK green reps network and encourage UNISON Region green networks and events, including an annual green week, promoting the greening of all workplaces;
- 7) Lead the way by working towards the greening of all UNISON workplaces and that our activities are environmentally responsible and in keeping with our green policies;
- 8) Produce fresh workplace bargaining guides to help branches engage their local employers and at the same time review and develop UNISON activist and member learning materials in this area;
- 9) Work with the TUC to re-establish the TUC green reps network and materials and the case for facility time for green reps;
- 10) Mobilise and work with the STUC, TUC and International TUC (ITUC) to support union lobbying and activities at COP26 and encourage attendance;
- 11) Continue to work with a range of different environmental groups and campaigns where there is a common interest and they share our aims and values;
- 12) Continue to promote the UNISON pension fund and climate change guide.

***National Executive Council***

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### **74. COP26 - Securing a New Political Settlement on Climate Change**

Conference notes with grave concern the overwhelming scientific evidence that demonstrates the world has warmed by 1 percent since the pre-industrial era with two thirds of that rise happening since 1986.

Conference supports the overwhelming scientific evidence demonstrating the near linear relationship between global warming and greenhouse gas emissions caused by over 42 billion tons of greenhouse pollution being dumped worldwide into the atmosphere every year.

Despite the 2016 Paris Agreement reached at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change global consumption of oil continues to increase adding a further 2.7 percent of greenhouse pollution annually.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

The 2017 report “Climate Science Special Report” concluded “there is no climate analog for this century anytime in the last 50million years”. Unless we achieve a significant change in political will worldwide, concentrations of carbon in the atmosphere will rise to nearly 800 ppm (parts per million) and temperatures will rise by four percent by the end of this Century.

Conference notes the increase in carbon emissions and the attendant increase in temperatures represents a major risk to human health, an intractable consequence to our natural environment and an existential threat to millions of species facing extinction.

We can already see the immediate impact global warming is having in countries across the globe through severe storms, rising seas, higher temperatures, drought and fire.

Conference is disappointed with the USA’s decision to withdraw US support for the Paris Agreement and the decision of his administration to relax restrictions on tailpipe emissions that account for 20 percent of US emissions, rules limiting coal fired power station emissions that account for 30 percent, and regulations for drilling companies to restrict venting methane.

Global warming is already with us, extreme weather events cause havoc to communities in the UK and elsewhere, threatening public services and putting significant pressure on government and council budgets.

Conference recognises the transition to a zero carbon economy has the potential to impact adversely on some communities ending jobs in certain sectors of the economy. The impact must therefore be managed through an effective strategy of industrial transition ensuring workers displaced have the necessary skills and opportunities to take advantage of jobs in new emerging industries including the UK’s renewable sector.

Conference notes that as the UK’s largest trade union, UNISON has a duty to adopt its own strategy to reduce the organisation’s environmental impact. UNISON needs to set an example for other organisations, determining the practical measures required to reduce carbon emissions and a clear carbon neutrality target.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for greater awareness amongst UNISON members of the threat posed by climate change;
- 2) Develop an environmental strategy to be implemented by all levels of the organisation with a clear carbon neutral target;
- 3) Lobby the UK Government to set challenging but achievable targets for reducing emissions;
- 4) Help to develop an international coalition of support from trade unions across the globe to secure political a new political settlement at COP26;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 5) Develop a campaign toolkit for branches to encourage all public sector employers to adopt carbon neutral targets with the necessary protections for employment, pay and conditions.

*Eastern Region*

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### 75. Climate Emergency and COP26

Climate change is the greatest single threat that humanity faces. Extreme weather events around the world are demonstrating the escalating dangers and impacts and the ways in which the most vulnerable are worst affected, particularly in the global south, despite having done the least to cause the crisis.

Conference praises the school climate strikers whose international efforts have helped focus world attention on the need to respond at scale and urgently to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 1.5C report. The science is showing that we will need to take account of tipping points which lead to runaway dangerous climate change as oceans warm and species are decimated, as wildfires and floods and air pollution cause devastation and climate refugees need support and protection. As Greta Thunberg rightly says to politicians, we must follow and act on the science.

However, world leaders, instead of responding with strong commitments at the United Nations COP25 climate conference in Madrid, failed to deliver on pledges in the Paris Agreement. The International TUC (ITUC), representing 207 million workers from 165 countries, said they were bitterly disappointed.

Trade unionists have fought for a just transition to be central to the Paris Agreement. As the focus now moves to the 2020 COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, Conference strongly supports campaigning work and lobbying for workers' demands, including on just transition, public ownership of energy and rail, energy efficiency, massively improved public transport and green workplace action. Public services must lead by example, with investment also in climate resilient infrastructure.

Conference welcomes declarations of climate emergency by governments and local authorities and other bodies, but it is urgent action plans and fast delivery of these that are now required at every level to meet net zero climate targets.

Conference is proud that UNISON's 2020 objectives commit UNISON to working with relevant organisations to achieve a net-zero carbon economy in the UK at the earliest opportunity.

Conference notes the important green workplace campaigning of UNISON Scotland's Green Network and by branches around the UK during Green UNISON Week last September, and key work in Scotland through the Just Transition Partnership, including the Scottish TUC. UNISON believes it is vital that the Scottish Just Transition Commission delivers a report that advises on urgent industrial and economic policy sufficient to the scale of the challenge, with a just transition for workers and communities at the heart. We cannot have repeats of failures and missed opportunities, for example to secure jobs in offshore wind as highlighted by the Fife Ready for Renewal Campaign.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to lobby the UK government to chair COP26 with determination to deliver on limiting temperature rise to 1.5C or as close to as possible, with just transition and climate justice central. The UK and Scottish governments must ensure they lead by example on this.

Conference also calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Mobilise and work with the STUC, TUC, Cymru/Wales TUC, ICTU and ITUC to support union lobbying and activities at COP26 and beyond, as well as working with and supporting voices from youth, the global south and others who may struggle to be heard and must not be missed out;
- 2) Continue to work with national and international environment, global justice and other relevant campaigns, where we have a common interest and share aims and values, to build a wide climate justice movement that builds power for the system change required to protect the planet;
- 3) Establish and support a network of branch green environment reps, with training and resource materials;
- 4) Work with the TUC to update and resource their earlier successful Green Workplace initiatives, with campaigning, educational and practical resources for trade unionists;
- 5) Encourage all branches to appoint green/environment reps and to negotiate green workplace agreements with employers, taking full account of the climate emergency and necessary action plans;
- 6) Lobby for statutory facility time for green environment reps and support branches to negotiate voluntary agreements on this in the meantime.

***Scotland Region***

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### **76. Green UNISON and the Climate Emergency**

Conference recognises the rising concern and horror that governments across the world are failing to tackle climate change and pollution. Donald Trump is set to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, ignoring scientists and the United Nations, and a private sector-led and voluntary approach is failing to fundamentally tackle the issue. Conference accepts that there is a serious climate emergency and that radical action is needed to avert climate catastrophe.

Governments must act with urgency and take the lead to reduce carbon emissions and other harmful environmental practices. At the current rate of progress, even the very modest targets set by the Paris Climate Agreement to limit rising temperatures to 1.5C by 2050 are unlikely to be achieved. Major action has to be undertaken by Government who having declared a climate emergency must take appropriate actions to avert the climate change catastrophe. Already over 200 Councils across the UK have declared a climate emergency and want to move faster than net zero carbon emissions in 2050, the current UK target set by the Westminster Parliament. The time to talk is over. The effect on our world and for future generations cannot be ignored. It is critical that we act now.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference applauds the striking school children across the world for raising the issue of climate change this year. On 20 September four million young people around the world took to the streets to strike and protest against climate change. A few days later Greta Thunberg berated the "empty words" of the world's leaders at the UN climate summit who are "failing" young people.

Council congratulates all those branches and members around the country who responded to a call from Greta Thunberg and showed their support for striking school children across the world in the demonstrations held on Friday 20 September 2019 by participating in public and workplace protests designed to raise the issue of climate change.

Greta Thunberg in December 2018 told the UN Climate Change Conference: "We are about to sacrifice our civilization for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue to make enormous amounts of money. We are about to sacrifice the biosphere so that rich people can live in luxury. ...If solutions within this system are so impossible to find then maybe we should change the system itself?" We stand with Greta.

Conference notes that UNISON Green week in September also saw a revival of workplace interest in environment reps being recruited and increased engagement with employers on the issue, some of which released staff to attend protests. Others have set up projects to 'green' their operations and reduce their own emissions, working in partnership with trade unions to do so. Council notes that UNISON Scotland's green activist network is a good example of how to share best practise and support branches and reps in challenging employers.

Conference recognises that branches may have an Environmental Officer or Green Rep who co-ordinates the union's green and environmental agenda in the branch and represents the workforce in discussions and negotiations regarding the development and implementation of company or employer environmental policies and practices.

Conference notes that a Green New Deal was prioritised in the Labour Party manifesto. Conference believes a Green New Deal is essential. Energy companies and other major public service institutions may need to be taken back into public ownership to enable the necessary actions to be undertaken to avert climate catastrophe. A Green plan to stop emissions should also go hand in hand with campaigns to save workers' jobs in the so-called 'dirty' industries. The transformation of these industries should harness the expertise of this highly skilled workforce and ensure an expansion of well-paid, unionised, environmentally sustainable jobs. This must be alongside other progressive policies including a major review of transport policy and the development of a fully integrated public transport system, reclaiming and revitalising our city centres, an energy-efficient house building programme, investment in health and education and reversing austerity. The role played by the trade unions will be a crucial factor in the coming months and years – in pushing these issues and campaigning for change.

Conference notes that public sector bodies have a significant carbon footprint, as well as rising energy bills, and an ability to influence not only service users but also the wider community. Improving energy efficiency not only supports a reduction in

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

carbon footprints but also reduces energy costs which can be reinvested in public services and staff. A recent government report noted that CO2 emissions in the public sector decreased by 30 percent between 1990 – 2018, accounting for 2 percent of all carbon emissions, with the private sector decreasing by 41 percent over the same period and accounting for 18 percent of all carbon emissions. However, in 2017-2018, CO2 emissions in the public sector actually increased by 4 percent, whilst there was a 0 percent increase in the private sector.

Conference believes tackling carbon emissions across public sector workplaces can have a significant impact on the UK achieving its net zero target and tackling the urgent climate crisis. Public Sector employers have a responsibility to commit to significant reductions in carbon emissions and investing in the necessary resources to do so.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Declare a Climate Emergency and promote this widely;
- 2) Reach out to the young climate strikers, encouraging branches and regions to engage positively with local groups and raising these ideas with them;
- 3) Work with all parts of the union to develop and promote a Green New Deal to tackle the climate emergency, eradicate poverty and reverse austerity;
- 4) Establish a National Green Network to support Green Reps and Environment Officers;
- 5) Encourage Regional Green Networks and events to support branches in establishing the Green Reps role;
- 6) Produce fresh workplace bargaining guides to help branches engage their local employers on Carbon Reduction Strategies and Carbon Management Programmes as well as other relevant Green workplace policies;
- 7) Work with the TUC to re-establish the TUC Green Reps network;
- 8) Campaign vigorously for policies at local, regional, national and international levels that will deliver rapid reductions in carbon emissions in relevant areas such as transport, energy, buildings, food production and waste management, whilst harnessing the expertise of the workforce and ensuring an expansion of fairly-paid, unionised, environmentally sustainable jobs;
- 9) Work with the TUC and other unions to ensure a just transition for all workers in energy intensive industries;
- 10) To promote public ownership and intervention to secure a shift towards a sustainable economy and society;
- 11) Publish a report on how UK public services and workplaces can meet zero carbon targets;
- 12) Continue to promote the Climate change and your pension: divestment guide;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 13) Launch a review of all UNISON's internal processes and procedures, aiming to be a union with a zero-carbon footprint.

*South East Region  
Isle of Wight*

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### 77. Climate Change

Climate change is an unprecedented global emergency that requires emergency action. Conference notes that in 2018 the UN Secretary General announced that humanity and life on Earth now face a “direct existential threat”. We recognise that climate change poses the single biggest threat to humanity, and just 100 companies are responsible for the majority of carbon emissions. The risks posed by the climate crisis include sea level rise, desertification, wildfires, water shortage, crop failure, extreme weather, displaced people, disease, and increased risks of wars and conflicts. We know it is the poorest and the working class, particularly in the Global South, that suffer most. Tackling climate change is therefore indivisible from social, racial and economic justice.

In 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was clear that science requires that we reach net zero emissions by 2030 as a minimum. That was always going to be a challenging target, but our chances of achieving this are significantly weakened by the December 2019 election result. We cannot wait for our government to take sufficient action on this issue because the consequences are too severe; we have to lead the way. This is particularly so this year because the world will be looking to the UK for leadership as the hosts of the annual Conference of Parties (26) UNFCCC, being held in Glasgow in November 2020.

In the Northern Region, we have been tackling the climate emergency by:

- 1) Incorporating climate change into our negotiating and bargaining strategy with employers;
- 2) Supporting employers to declare a climate emergency, complete a carbon audit and produce action plans in line with science;
- 3) Identifying climate change champions in our branches;
- 4) Supporting the school strikes for the climate;
- 5) Pushing for local government pension funds to divest from carbon;
- 6) Identifying a staff climate change lead;
- 7) Launching a Climate Activist Network;
- 8) Incorporating climate change into our political work by calling for a Green new Deal that ensures a fully funded and just transition to well-paid unionised green jobs for all, expanding public ownership of industry and services, the provision of universal services through a fully funded public sector, including safe, affordable housing, free quality healthcare, secure and affordable energy and heat to end fuel poverty, mass investment in affordable, high quality public transport, a

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

socially and environmentally just food system, an end to fossil fuel subsidies and fracking, and proper investment in renewable energy.

We recognise and value that UNISON has worked for strong action on climate change for many years by calling for a just transition. We believe it is vital that this just transition takes place now. We support our energy workers in leading the transition by calling for employers to work with our members urgently; to develop plans and provide the training required to transition to net zero by 2030. We believe that the sooner that our members are leading this transition, the more positive it will be to our members.

We call upon the National Executive Council to support our work and continue to show solidarity to the school climate strikers and the Global South by:

- a) Announcing a climate change emergency;
- b) Continuing to treat climate change as a priority campaign;
- c) Completing a carbon audit for UNISON and producing a climate action plan for UNISON to reduce emissions in lines with science;
- d) Commit to becoming plastic free and working with organisations such as surfers against sewage to develop a strategy to achieve this;
- e) Prioritise supporting our energy workers to proactively engage their employers in the creation of mutually agreed plans to transition to renewable energy. These plans must include the provision of training and any other requirements to ensure a just transition to green, well paid and unionised jobs.
- f) Arranging for UNISON to have a significant presence both inside and outside of the Conference of Parties UNFCCC 26 to support the global call for urgent action, and to ensure that UNISON's voice is heard at the highest level;
- g) Encouraging and supporting branches and regions to identify climate change champions and develop climate activist networks;
- h) Re-launch the LGPS divestment materials and provide regional training regarding divestment from local government pension funds;
- i) Supporting the call for a Green New Deal to ensure proper investment for a just transition;
- j) Working with Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) and relevant external organisations to produce climate change training for branches which would cover what climate change is, how we can negotiate with employers to tackle the issue, and how it can tie into our political work.

***Northern Region***

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### **78. System Change Not Climate Change**

Conference notes:

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 1) That catastrophic climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity. The Earth's temperature has already risen by 1 degree above pre-industrial levels. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report in 2018 warned that we only have 12 years to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees. Carbon emissions need to be cut by 45 percent by 2030 and reach zero by 2050 in order to avoid a dangerous tipping point;
- 2) That the technology exists to stop climate change but the political will does not;
- 3) The tremendous impact of the school students strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion (XR) rebellions in shifting government complacency over climate change;
- 4) The participation of workers in the Earth strikes including solidarity strikes, rallies and protests.

Conference believes that:

- a) Climate change is a trade union issue;
- b) The fight to stop climate change is an issue for all working people not just those employed in industries that emit greenhouse gases;
- c) The involvement of the trade unions in the fight to stop climate change can ensure that there is a just transition to a sustainable economy. Active union involvement can ensure that measures to combat climate change will create jobs as proposed by the One Million Climate Jobs campaign and the Green New Deal;
- d) The future of our planet is at risk if we do not organise now to force governments to cut emissions in line with the IPCC report;
- e) The decision by the last Labour Party Conference to commit to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030 and implement a Green New Deal is very welcome;
- f) We must keep the pressure up - the school students have led the way but the trade union movement must act now to ensure that they do not fight alone.

Conference resolves to:

- i) Call on branches and regions to show solidarity with further Earth Strikes within the law;
- ii) Work with the UK Schools Climate Network, XR and the Campaign Against Climate Change;
- iii) Invite Greta Thunberg to address National Delegate Conference.

***London Fire Brigade***

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### **79. System Change not Climate Change**

Conference notes:

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 1) That catastrophic climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity. The Earth's temperature has already risen by 1 degree above pre-industrial levels. The IPCC report in 2018 warned that we have 11 years to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees. There has been an overall global increase in carbon emissions in the last year even though our Government and a number of councils have declared a Climate Emergency;
- 2) That the technology exists to stop climate change but the political will does not;
- 3) Air pollution is the number one cause of deaths in the UK from environmental impacts, resulting in the estimated premature deaths of between 29,000 and 40,000 citizens a year and an economic cost of £54 billion;
- 4) The UK government has been taken to the European Court by Client Earth over its failure to act on illegal air pollution levels and the Government has lost its case which means it must now act;
- 5) A large number of our members work outdoors and are regularly exposed to air pollution;
- 6) The tremendous impact of the school students strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg and XR rebellions in shifting government complacency and public opinion over climate change;
- 7) The participation of workers in the Earth strikes including solidarity strikes.

Conference believes that:

- a) Climate change is a trade union issue;
- b) The fight to stop climate change is an issue for all working people not just those in employed industries that emit greenhouse gases;
- c) The involvement of the trade unions in the fight to stop climate change can ensure that there is a just transition to a sustainable economy. Active union involvement can ensure that measures to combat climate change will create jobs as proposed by the One Million Climate Jobs campaign the Green New Deal;
- d) The future of our planet is at risk if we do not organise now to force governments to cut emissions in line with the IPCC report;
- e) The decision by Labour Party Conference 2019 committing to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030 to implement a Green New Deal is very welcome;
- f) We must keep the pressure up - the school students have led the way but the trade union movement as a whole must now act to ensure that they don't fight alone;
- g) Our members have the right to work in a safe environment and for any associated risks to be mitigated.

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference resolves to:

- i) Call on branches and regions to show solidarity with further Earth Strikes within the law;
- ii) Work with UK Schools Climate Network, XR and the Campaign Against Climate Change;
- iii) Invite Greta Thunberg to address National Delegate Conference next year;
- iv) Join any campaigns and encourage any campaigns to declare Public Transport free in order to drastically reduce carbon emissions and pollution;
- v) Use UNISON resources to develop policies and any approaches local employers – particularly Councils – could adopt to limit carbon emissions;
- vi) Mobilise and provide appropriate transport, preferably trains, to get as many members and their family and friends as possible to Glasgow for the protests organised around the COP26 talks.

*Barnet*

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### 80. System Change not Climate Change

Conference notes:

- 1) That catastrophic climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity. The Earth's temperature has already risen by one degree above pre-industrial levels. The IPCC report in 2018 warned that we only have 12 years to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees. Yet 2020 started with Australia on fire and Indonesia under water;
- 2) That the technology exists to stop climate change but the political will does not. Governments across the world are failing to tackle the climate emergency, led by Trump pulling out of the Paris agreement;
- 3) That numerous Councils across the UK have declared a climate emergency and are starting to move towards decarbonising. UNISON is committed to a target of net zero carbon by 2030 in line with the accepted science;
- 4) Millions of pounds of our pension funds are invested in both the fossil fuel industry and companies with high carbon emissions;
- 5) The tremendous impact of the school students' strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg, and Extinction Rebellion (XR) uprisings in shifting government complacency over climate change. They have involved and inspired millions;
- 6) The participation of workers, including many UNISON members, in the Earth strikes including solidarity strikes, rallies and protests;
- 7) That the next international climate change summit, COP 26, in Glasgow in November 2020 and protests and lobbies are planned.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference believes that:

- a) Climate change is a trade union issue. The fight to stop climate change is an issue for all working people, not just those employed in industries that emit greenhouse gases. The involvement of trade unions in the fight to stop climate change can ensure that there is a just transition to a sustainable economy. We can ensure that measures to combat climate change will create jobs as proposed by the One Million Climate Jobs campaign and the Green New Deal;
- b) UNISON can lead the way in the campaign to divest our pension funds from the fossil fuel industry, and to end investment in companies with high carbon emissions.

Conference resolves to:

- i) Encourage branches and regions to show solidarity with further Earth Strikes. The school students have given us hope, but they must not fight alone. We can work with the UK Schools Climate Network, XR and the Campaign Against Climate Change;
- ii) Affiliate to the Campaign Against Climate Change and encourage branches and regions to affiliate;
- iii) Mobilise and work with the STUC, TUC and other trade unions to support the protests, lobbies, meetings and similar union events at COP 26. This includes UNISON chartering trains from London and other regions to Glasgow to ensure the biggest possible turnout;
- iv) Organise another UNISON Green Week to help publicise and mobilise for COP 26, and during that week to send a delegation to join Greta Thunberg on a Fridays4Future school strike.

***Camden***

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### **81. Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration**

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency;
- 2) Work with and support other trade unions (both within the UK and internationally) and ask the Trade Union Congress to also declare a Climate Emergency;
- 3) Pledge to make UNISON carbon neutral by 2030;
- 4) Call on government or devolved bodies to provide powers and resources to make this possible;
- 5) Develop a detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan and report back to National Executive Council within six months with an update on the actions being taken to address the Climate Emergency and its transition to carbon neutrality.

***Environment Agency Head Office***

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

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### **82. UNISON Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration**

UNISON is the largest trade union in the country with over 1.3 million members. It is in a unique position to influence members, trade unions, employers and government.

Conference notes that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees, published in October 2018, describes the enormous harm that a 2 degrees rise is likely to cause compared with a 1.5 degrees rise, and confirms that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities and others including trade unions.

As well as increasing temperatures in the UK and more extreme weather around the world human activities are also having a catastrophic impact on nature. The worldwide population of mammals, birds, fish and aquatic creatures, amphibians and reptiles have plunged by almost 60 percent, since 1970. Current rates of species extinction are 100 to 1,000 times higher than the "standard rate" of extinction. There are also huge health impacts associated with fossil fuels, for example, air pollution causes 40,000 excess deaths every year in the UK and reduces average life span globally by two years.

In the UK and across the world climate change will disproportionately affect people on low incomes, which includes many of UNISON's members.

To reduce the chance of runaway global warming and limit the effects of climate breakdown, it is imperative that, as a species, we reduce our CO2 carbon equivalent emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible. Significant lifestyle changes are needed, but these can only be achieved if they are supported by changes to laws, taxation, infrastructure etcetera, to make low carbon living easier and the new norm. The good news is there are many social, environmental and economic benefits in doing so.

We welcome the Climate Emergency declarations by the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and the UK Parliament in April and May last year. We welcome similar declarations by UK cities, towns and parishes. We welcome the Environment Agency's commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030.

For the sake of future generations we urge UNISON to join with these organisations and to be a leading example in the fight against climate change. To show leadership and become the first major trade union to declare a Climate Emergency.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency;
- 2) Work with and support other trade unions (both within the UK and Internationally) and ask the Trade Union Congress to also declare a Climate Emergency;
- 3) Pledge to make UNISON carbon neutral by 2030;
- 4) Call on government or devolved bodies to provide powers and resources to make this possible;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 5) Develop a detailed Climate Emergency Action Plan and report back to National Executive Council within six months with an update on the actions being taken to address the Climate Emergency and its transition to carbon neutrality.

*Environment Agency Midland*

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### **83. UNISON and the Climate Emergency**

On 20 September four million young people and workers around the world took to the streets to strike and protest against climate change. A few days later Greta Thunberg berated the "empty words" of the world's leaders at the UN climate summit who are "failing" young people. Conference applauds those young people who have been at the forefront of this movement.

Conference accepts that there is a serious climate emergency and that radical action is needed to avert climate catastrophe. We accept that everyone in the union has a role to play in this – including individual members, branches, regions and the national union. Major action has to be undertaken by Government who having declared a climate emergency must take appropriate actions to avert the climate change catastrophe.

At the current rate of progress, even the very modest targets set by the Paris Climate Agreement to limit rising temperatures to 1.5 degrees by 2050 are unlikely to be achieved. A report from investment data company Arabesque S-Ray has revealed that 80 percent of the biggest 200 companies globally are unlikely to meet the target and 30 percent of them don't even disclose what their greenhouse emissions are. These corporations with their drive for profit must be held to account by Governments and have much stronger regulations controlling their ways of working, including the option of public ownership.

The climate emergency was a prioritised topic in the Labour Party Manifesto. Despite the Labour Party's defeat in the general election UNISON believes a Green New Deal is still essential. A Green plan to stop emissions should also go hand in hand with campaigns to save workers' jobs in the so-called 'dirty' industries. The transformation of these industries should harness the expertise of this highly skilled workforce and ensure an expansion of well-paid, unionised, environmentally sustainable jobs.

Conference believes that a Green New Deal is a priority for a healthy society. Energy companies and other major public service institutions may need to be taken back into public ownership to enable the necessary actions to be undertaken to avert climate catastrophe.

We believe that a progressive government carrying out a Green New Deal would be a significant step in the right direction towards addressing the climate emergency. This must be alongside other progressive policies including a major review of transport policy and the development of a fully integrated public transport system, reclaiming and revitalising our city centres from the blight of the motor car, an energy-efficient housebuilding programme, investment in health and education and reversing austerity.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Unfortunately successive governments have failed to deliver the necessary scale and pace of change. The role played by the trade unions will therefore be a crucial factor in the coming months and years – in pushing these issues and campaigning for change.

Greta Thunberg in December 2018 told the UN Climate Change Conference: “We are about to sacrifice our civilisation for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue to make enormous amounts of money. We are about to sacrifice the biosphere so that rich people...can live in luxury. It is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few.” And “We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again. You’ve run out of excuses and we’re running out of time. ...if solutions within this system are so impossible to find then maybe we should change the system itself?”

We stand with Greta.

Conference believes that UNISON needs to be leading from the front as an organisation in terms of our policies and our own green agenda.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with all parts of the union to develop and promote a Green New Deal to tackle the climate emergency, eradicate poverty and reverse austerity;
- 2) Campaign vigorously for policies at local, regional, national and international levels that will deliver rapid reductions in carbon emissions in relevant areas such as transport, energy, buildings, food production and waste management, whilst harnessing the expertise of the workforce and ensuring an expansion of fairly-paid, unionised, environmentally sustainable jobs;
- 3) Launch a review of all UNISON’s internal processes and procedures, aiming to be a union with a zero-carbon footprint;
- 4) Reach out to the young climate strikers, encouraging branches and regions to engage positively with local groups and raising these ideas with them.

***Surrey County***

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### **84. COP 26 and Climate Change**

Conference notes that the next meeting of the United Nations Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP26) is taking place in Glasgow in November 2020. This could be the last chance for world leaders and states to put in place effective measures to ensure that the pace of global warming and climate change is slowed down to keep below the disastrous levels that our current economic and political systems are heading.

Conference notes that climate change is already happening and that public bodies are already dealing with the consequences in flooding defences, responding to severe weather events and the impact on health of higher temperatures and polluted air.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference accepts that to address this crisis will include significant reductions in the use of carbon fossil fuels and that current government targets are not sufficiently ambitious. In particular the continued granting of licenses for oil and gas exploration in UK waters and their failure to ban outright fracking indicate their failure to properly grasp the urgency of the climate emergency that now exists.

Conference recognises the success of the Green UNISON Week in the run up to the global climate strike in September 2019. This demonstrated UNISON's leading role and commitment to tackling climate change and built on our campaigns for pension funds to divest from fossil fuels and to promote non-carbon alternatives to transform our gas supply.

As a public sector and energy union, conference recognises the critical role UNISON has in taking a lead within the trade union movement in pushing forward this agenda. We recognise that the public sector is a significant user of carbon and that thousands of members are employed in the carbon fossil fuel sector. We therefore recognise the urgent need for the de-carbonisation of the public sector and energy industry. However this transformation needs to be one that protects both jobs and services which is the basis of the Just Transition campaigns which UNISON has taken a leading role in alongside other unions and environmental groups.

Conference also recognises that Just Transition must include those people in the global south who have benefitted least from the exploitation of fossil fuels in the last 200 years but who are the first victims of global warming. Governments of the industrialised world must provide support, resources and technology to the global south to ameliorate the immediate impacts of rising sea-levels, the loss of arable land and the failure of water supplies in rivers and lakes.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Conduct a full review of our own use of carbon at national, regional and branch level, by the organisation, staff and lay members, and issue guidance to enable all levels of the union to contribute to UNISON becoming carbon neutral at the earliest opportunity;
- 2) Mobilise for a significant UNISON engagement at COP26 to ensure the needs of workers and public services are central to the outcomes. This includes encouraging members to participate in preparations for and in activities in Glasgow during COP26;
- 3) Work with international trade union partners to assist in ensuring that the international trade union movement, particularly from the global south, are represented at COP26, including overcoming the UK government's hostile visa procedures;
- 4) Demand that the UK government adopts policies that will allow the UK to be leading by example at COP26. These policies would include stopping further exploration for fossil fuels in UK waters, banning fracking, investing in research and infra-structure to move away from fossil fuels in electricity generation, gas supply and transport, and invests in a programme to insulate all homes and

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

public buildings with laws to ensure all new buildings are constructed to the highest zero-carbon standards;

- 5) Continues to support the creation of a UK Just Transition Commission to develop the new industries and jobs needed in a zero carbon economy;
- 6) Calls on the government to invest in local authorities and environmental protection agencies to enable them to meet the immediate impacts of global warming and climate change and improve public sector resilience in the face of this emergency.

*South Lanarkshire*

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### 85. Workers Action to Solve the Climate Crisis

Conference notes that:

- 1) In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report which concluded that we have less than 12 years to act to avoid the worst impacts of climate change to radically reduce fossil fuel emissions or face irreversible ecological damage. We now have less than a decade to act;
- 2) We are inspired by the radicalism and militancy of youth climate strikers and others taking direct action to highlight this crisis and demand radical action from governments. We believe climate change is a class issue, and that workers' agency is crucial to affecting the transformation of our economy and society necessary to prevent climate catastrophe;
- 3) The United Nations 26th Climate Change Conference (COP26) will meet in Glasgow in November this year.

Conference further notes:

- a) Many of our employers and public bodies (councils, the NHS, universities and other organisations) have taken the step to call a Climate Emergency, many developing initiatives at a local level to reduce emissions.

Conference believes:

- i) As workers in the public, voluntary and private sector – we can and should demand of our employers and businesses to do more to transform work and business to reduce fossil fuel emissions;
- ii) Radical demands such as free and improved public transport, free childcare and adult care, reduced working week and improved annual leave entitlements are all central to supporting working class people moving away from reliance on cars and airplanes;
- iii) As our members are disproportionately low paid and living in council or social housing, we need to call on councils and the government to radically improve the energy efficiency of housing to both reduce emissions and lower energy builds and waste.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference endorses policies now emerging as part of discussions in the labour movement around a socialist Green New Deal, including:

- A) A target of net-zero UK carbon emissions by 2030;
- B) Creating millions of public, well-paid, unionised green jobs;
- C) Public ownership of energy including expropriating the Big Six energy companies, creating an integrated, democratic system. Large-scale investment in renewables, rapidly phasing out fossil fuels;
- D) Public ownership of transport – majorally expanded, integrated, free or cheaper;
- E) A public program manufacturing, installing and training in renewable technologies and eliminating waste. Mass insulation and building and retrofitting zero-carbon council housing and public buildings;
- F) A workers' led "just transition" from high-emission jobs to alternatives, with public investment guaranteeing communities and living standards;
- G) Democratic public ownership of banking and finance, providing resources and economic leverage;
- H) Pausing and moratorium on airport expansion, consulting transport-sector workers about alternatives;
- I) Repealing all anti-union laws, so workers can freely take industrial action over wider social and political issues, from fire safety to climate change.

Conference recognises that our members and the members of other unions have a central role to play in a workers led just transition to a carbon neutral economy and demands that workers voices are central to ensure that we are not made to pay for the economic crisis called by the rich and business.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- I) Develop a radical campaign with youth strikers and other unions where possible, to highlight the climate emergency and the need for a worker-led just transition;
- II) Produce a campaign toolkit for branches and workplace groups who want to run campaigns to de-carbonise their workplace;
- III) Encourage all service groups and branches to consider developing workers plans for their sector to address the climate emergency, and where possible consider environmental demands in national or local disputes;
- IV) Encourages branches and regions to make links with and offer support to youth climate strikers including coordinating any planned strikes or protests with the climate strikes;
- V) Issue a statement of solidarity from UNISON in support of youth climate strikes;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- VI) Ensure that UNISON members working in the energy and transport sectors are centrally engaged in discussions about worker led transitions to a zero-carbon economy;
- VII) Work with other unions and climate campaign organisations to call a national demonstration in Glasgow to coincide with COP26 to highlight our demands for a workers-led just transition, a socialist green new deal and demanding that the rich and business should to address the climate emergency.

*Newcastle City*

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### 86. Climate Action 2020

Conference notes:

- 1) The Trade Union Congress says 22-24°C is the comfort zone for work, calls for legal maximum temperature at work of 30 degrees, and calls for legal maximum temperature for strenuous work of 27 degrees;
- 2) If blood temperature reaches 39 degrees there is a risk of heat stroke or collapse;
- 3) Around the world we are seeing more and more record high temperatures;
- 4) The impact of the school student climate strikes initiated by Greta Thunberg and the growing international climate movement;
- 5) The United Nations COP26 Climate Summit will be held in the UK in November 2020, where world leaders will be under huge pressure to take effective action and will be a major focus for the international climate movement.

Conference believes:

- a) Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity and is a trade union issue;
- b) Government failure to take action to slash carbon and greenhouse gas emissions means there are likely to be more extreme weather events and more extreme climate change;
- c) While it is the poor and workers in the global south who suffer most from extreme weather events and climate change, the poor and workers in more developed economies also suffer;
- d) The COP26 Climate Summit will see world leaders will be under huge pressure to take effective action and will be a major focus for the international climate movement.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Campaign for the repeal of anti-trade union laws that could prevent workers from taking industrial action over the impact of climate change;

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- ii) Produce a guide explaining what lawful action, in accordance with UNISON's rules, could be considered to defend the health and safety of workers from rising temperatures and extreme weather events;
- iii) Encourage branches and regions to organise transport, such as chartering trains, so that people can join the climate protests in November at the COP26 Summit.

*Portsmouth City*

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International

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### **87. Campaigning for a Law to Prevent Business from Abusing People and the Planet Everywhere**

The gains made in workers' rights at home and abroad under the previous Labour government and 40 years of membership of the European Union are severely under threat by our new fortified extreme right wing government. At the same time, despite progress in negotiations for a United Nations Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights (NDC 2019 motion 81), still, no global binding regulation exists to meaningfully curb corporate power and prevent it from abusing people and the environment. The consequences of vial, systematic daily abuse are well known and do not need repeating.

In 2017, France passed a Corporate Duty of Vigilance law which is a legally forces parent companies to identify and prevent adverse human rights and environmental impacts resulting from their own activities, as well as those they have relationships with. Those companies must take very specific actions to analyse and publish their risks, take action to prevent them, provide remedy should abuse occur and publish transparent annual reports. Should they fall short, they can be taken to court in France, even if the abuse happened far away, and prove they did everything in their power to prevent that abuse. Two court cases against Total Oil Company have begun and UNI Global Union has put one of the world's largest call centre companies, Teleperformance on notice to improve their actions or face being taken to court.

Across Europe, civil society in many countries have been proposing and campaigning for similar laws. Switzerland, Germany and Austria, Finland and Norway all have draft legislation. And in 2019 civil society (including UNISON and PSI) called for an umbrella law at European Union (EU) level. This EU wide law has the potential to capture all companies that do business in the EU and therefore, post Brexit, large numbers of UK companies could be captured. This could help prevent the UK from becoming a low cost, low labour standards EU neighbour. But it is not guaranteed.

Since 2018, UNISON has collaborated with UK civil society to design a legal proposal to make UK companies prevent human rights, labour rights and environmental abuses linked to their global operations and supply chains. And unlike other European countries, learning from the mistakes of the Modern Slavery Act, we have suggested that the public sector should be within the scope of any UK law. This idea has already gained support from the European Public Services Union that we are affiliated to and the European Trade Union Congress whom the TUC affiliate to.

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Such a law will not seek to replace existing effective laws such as those that give power to our Health and Safety inspectors, nor do we believe it can solve everything. But with strong liability mechanisms in place, perhaps even criminal, it will be a vital step towards filling the legal vacuum that currently enables corporations to get away with putting profit to be put before human beings and our precious environment. We know the campaign will be a long one but it will be worth it.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to input into the development of the UK civil society legal proposal, including proposing the most effective way to include the public sector in its scope;
- 2) Contribute towards raising awareness and campaigning to build support for such a law within our membership and affiliated MP's;
- 3) Hold the government to account for its continued support for voluntary corporate responsibility;
- 4) Work with Public Services International to call for an EU wide mandatory human rights due diligence law.

*Lancashire Police*

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### **88. Palestine: The Right to Defend Human Workers' Rights**

Conference is deeply concerned by the Conservative government's plans to introduce new regulations to restrict the ability of public bodies to take practical steps to support human and workers' rights and an end to the occupation of Palestine.

At a time when the international community should be condemning attempts by the US and Israeli governments to normalise and entrench the occupation, and overturn decades of international law, it is extremely disturbing that the UK government is seeking to restrict Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), as a legitimate and practical way to demand that the Israeli government ends its repression of the Palestinian people and contributes towards the building of peace.

The plans, announced in the Queen's Speech on 19 December 2019, aim to "stop public institutions from imposing their own approach or views about international relations, through preventing boycott, divestment or sanctions campaigns against foreign countries and those who trade with them".

Conference is concerned that this policy will undermine local democracy, by restricting the ability of public bodies, including local government, to purchase, procure and invest ethically, in the interest of workers and the communities they represent.

Whilst the intent of this policy is clearly to restrict campaigning in support of Palestinian rights, it may also undermine UNISON's work, in support of human and workers' rights in other parts of the world. UNISON has a proud history of supporting boycotts, divestment or sanctions in its campaigning against apartheid in South

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Africa, and for justice and rights in Western Sahara, Colombia and Burma, all of which would be severely restricted by this policy.

Conference notes that the government has already attempted to introduce regulations, requiring Local Government Pension Scheme funds to invest in accordance with UK foreign policy, and welcomes the efforts of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, supported by UNISON, to challenge the regulations in the courts. Pension investments should be made in scheme members' interests, not the interests of the foreign secretary.

Conference notes that UNISON was one of the first trade unions in Europe to respond to the call from Palestinian civil society, including trade unions, by passing a BDS policy, and reaffirms its support for BDS as a practical way to force the Israeli government to end the occupation and colonisation of Palestinian land, dismantle the Wall, recognise the fundamental rights of Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territory and the right of refugees to return.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue defending the right of public bodies to purchase, procure and invest ethically, including by using BDS in support of Palestinian rights;
- 2) Support branches to campaign for Local Government Pension funds to engage with the companies they invest in and to demand they end their involvement in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the violation of Palestinian human rights, subject to the outcome of judicial review, and any further guidance or regulations issued by government;
- 3) Continue supporting BDS in a targeted way to demand an end to the occupation and hold the Israeli government accountable for its violations of Palestinian rights and of international law.

***National Executive Council***

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### **89. Palestine**

For the last 13 years Gaza has been devastated by a tight land, sea and air blockade, which has turned this narrow strip of land into a virtual prison for two million women, children and men. The blockade has decimated basic public services including health, education, water, sanitation and electricity, leading the UN to estimate that Gaza will be uninhabitable by 2020.

Conference condemns the continued Israeli airstrikes on Gaza and the brutal massacre of Palestinian protestors, near Gaza's border with Israel, during the 'Great March of Return'. We stand in solidarity with the brave health workers, who risked and even sacrificed their lives to rescue and treat protestors injured by Israeli gunfire.

Gaza's health services are on the verge of collapse. Electricity cuts and severe shortages of drugs, medical supplies, clean water and staff, caused by the blockade, have severely reduced the capacity of public hospitals to treat patients, particularly

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

complex cases. Many patients in Gaza are referred to Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank, particularly East Jerusalem, but only a fraction are permitted to travel.

Conference notes with concern that despite the continuing repression of the Palestinian people and the brutal massacre in Gaza, defence collaboration between the UK and Israeli governments, including the arms trade, has increased in recent years. Conference reaffirms its demand for the UK government to suspend the arms trade with Israel until the Israeli government complies with its international human rights obligations.

Conference condemns the Conservative government's plans to prohibit public bodies from imposing their own direct or indirect boycott divestment or sanctions (BDS) campaigns against foreign countries. It is clear that this policy is solely targeted at BDS campaigns aiming to hold Israel accountable for its violation of Palestinian rights. The government has already tried to prohibit Local Government Pension Schemes from divesting from companies complicit in Israel's violations of international law. This newly proposed law is therefore a further attack on trade unions and, in particular, our union's ability to demand that our pension funds do not continue to fund the illegal occupation.

Conference condemns the announcement by the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, that the US no longer considers Israeli settlements to be illegal under international law. Since the election of Donald Trump, the Israeli government has intensified its colonisation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in defiance of successive UN resolutions and international law. In 2019 the Israeli government increased the rate of settlement construction in the West Bank and since the US announcement has revealed its intention to further illegally colonise and annex Palestinian lands and build thousands more settler homes. This will continue to have a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians, restricting their freedom of movement, access to essential services, homes and jobs.

Half a century of occupation has led to a system of institutionalised discrimination against Palestinians. President Trump wants to create new facts on the ground. A two-state solution was the result of American peacemaking within a rules-based world order, which Trump detests because it is inimical to the raw power that he prefers to govern global affairs. The UK's foreign policy will become hostage to such an approach. UK government's welcome of Trump's "serious proposal" is as depressing as it is predictable. The US annexation proposals should be rejected and the illegality of Israeli settlements reiterated. We are present at the creation of dangerous times in the world, not just in the Middle East.

These serious violations of international law should have prompted the EU and European governments to take action, as Israel's largest trade partner. Instead military, financial and settlement trade relations continue to undermine Palestinian human rights.

Conference reaffirms UNISON's commitment to the European Trade Union Network for Justice for Palestine, to bring together European trade unions to collaborate on campaigns to end European and corporate complicity with Israeli violations of international law.

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Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign for the UK government to suspend the arms trade with Israel;
- 2) Campaign against the UK government's proposed new laws to prevent public sector bodies' ability to boycott particular companies;
- 3) Continue to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns as legitimate means to pressure Israel to end the illegal occupation and stop violations of international law;
- 4) Campaign for quality public services and decent work for Palestinians;
- 5) Support and affiliate to the European Trade Union Network for Justice for Palestine;
- 6) Encourage branches to affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and actively support its work.

*North West Region  
Scotland Region*

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### **90. End the Detention and Torture of Palestinian Students**

Conference is appalled by the continued violence experienced by the people of Palestine at the hands of the Israeli Government, and especially the detention and torture of young people. We condemn the recent rise in the detention of students with Addameer, a Palestinian prisoners' rights organisation stating in September 2019 that over 260 Palestinian High School and university students imprisoned in Israeli jails since the start of last year.

A Palestinian journalism student, Mays Abu Ghosh is one such detainee. She remains in detention but has spoken through her lawyer of the physical and mental torture she was subject to under interrogation. She has described being slapped, beaten, deprived of sleep and put in stress positions. She was threatened with the detention of her whole family and her 17 year old brother has since been placed in "administrative detention" where he can be held without charge or trial. Mays is 22.

Conference condemns Israel's treatment of Palestinian students and other Palestinians in their prisons and calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Highlight these appalling abuses and lobby the UK and devolved governments to press the government of Israel to end the detention and torture of Palestinian students like Mays Abu Ghosh;
- 2) Urge branches and regions to write to local MPs and MSPs calling on them to raise this issue in the Westminster and devolved administrations and to press their governments to put pressure on the government of Israel to end the detention and torture of Palestinian young people;
- 3) Publicise UNISON's position to members to raise awareness of these abuses and encourage members to lobby their MPs and MSPs;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 4) Raise this issue through Labour Link and call on them to add their voice to the condemnation of Israel's detention and torture of Palestinian young people;
- 5) Continue to support a campaign of Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel and urge employers to boycott Israeli goods and cultural events and pension funds to divest from companies profiting from the Israeli government's oppression of the people of Palestine.

*Aberdeenshire*

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### **91. Reject the Trump "Peace" Plan for Palestine**

Since he was elected four years ago, US President Donald Trump has entrusted the Israel/Palestine portfolio to his inexperienced, son-in-law, Jared Kushner, aided by two equally unqualified individuals: Ambassador David Friedman and envoy Jason Greenblatt.

For this administration, there was no need even to pretend to be balanced or to strike a political compromise, supposedly resting on a two-state solution. Trump has went further than any past pro-Israel White House, recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, giving his blessing to illegal Israeli settlements, green-lighting Israel's annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights, and cutting funding for Palestinian humanitarian aid. All while ignoring the on-going killings by the IDF of unarmed Palestinians and indorsing the inhumane treatment of the people of Gaza.

Donald Trump has shown no concern for promoting peace. It is thus no surprise that the "deal of the century" has he calls it, outlines a plan for political surrender by Palestinians, sugarcoated with economic inducements provided they give up all their rights and grievances under international law, of which Palestinians are continually denied.

What is nonetheless shocking and unacceptable is that the Trump deal institutionalises apartheid, even asking its Palestinian victims to give their formal consent to this oppressive arrangement. Conference even the leaders of the South African apartheid regime never dared go this far in their racist endeavours.

The map outlined in Trump's plan clearly resembles the South African Bantustans enclaves filled with subjugated people, confined behind walls in their own homeland.

Conference Israel continues to find offence of allegations of apartheid being applied to it as a state and if it wishes to remove this stain then it must stop implementing both in policy and in practice "Apartheid" one such law, of many, the "nation state law".

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to support the following actions:

- 1) UNISON should continue to support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign and seek to work with other trade union partners in adopting similar policies both in the UK and within the wider European network;
- 2) UNISON should reject outright the so called "Trump Deal of the Century" on a road map to peace as a viable legitimate process;

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- 3) UNISON to continue its support as a non-negotiable right. The right of return as a cornerstone of the Palestinian struggle;
- 4) UNISON to continue to work with Jewish human rights groups inside Israel in the promotion of peace and human rights for all within the region;
- 5) UNISON to continue to enhance and keep updated with events on the ground in Palestine our overall UNISON policy on Palestine. Including facilitating discussions on formulating a UNISON position on a one state solution based on a human rights and international law framework. Without undermining Palestine's right to self-determination.

### ***Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast and Muckamore Abbey***

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#### **92. Re-instate the Sacked Kurdish Mayors in Turkey**

Conference notes that since the municipal elections held in Turkey in early 2019 the government of President Erdogan's AKP has shown contempt for the democratic outcomes.

During the election campaign the campaigning by opposition parties, including the second and third biggest parties the CHP and the HDP, were curtailed by violent attacks and the arrest and intimidation of candidates and party workers by the police. Opposition media was systematically attacked, with outlets closed down and journalists sacked and arrested.

Three successful mayoral candidates of the pro-Kurdish HDP were not allowed to take office and the second placed AKP candidate declared elected.

In Istanbul the CHP candidate defeated the governing party candidate in the mayoral election. After pressure from the President the country's electoral administration ordered a re-run.

In the following months almost 30 elected mayors of the HDP have been dismissed from office and replaced by government supporting trustees to implement government policies at odds with the wishes of the local electorate. Many of these Mayors have been arrested on false charges with some of these currently detained.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Write to the Turkish Ambassador calling for the dismissed Mayors to be re-instated and released from detention;
- 2) Contact the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and call on them to raise concerns with the Turkish authorities;
- 3) Send a message to the dismissed Mayors, via the HDP, affirming support for local democracy in Turkey as elsewhere.

***South Lanarkshire***

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#### **93. Support the Kurds and Free Abdullah Öcalan**

Conference notes:

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- 1) Since his abduction in 1999, Abdullah Öcalan has been continuously denied his human rights under Turkish and international law and we draw particular attention to the UN-mandated;
- 2) “Mandela Rules” (58 to 63) (1) for the ethical treatment of prisoners as well as the European Convention of Human Rights which Turkey signed in 1986;
- 3) The Turkish state is currently abusing anti-terror legislation to persecute and criminalise its political opponents. 300 Kurdish political prisoners including MP Leyla Güven are on hunger strike to protest the treatment of the Kurds and Öcalan’s isolation and imprisonment;
- 4) Öcalan has called repeatedly for a democratic resolution within Turkey to secure a peaceful and lasting solution;
- 5) The illegal invasion of Afrin by the Turkish regime has displaced 150,000 civilians and is a destabilising influence on the region. Turkey has stated that Kurds east of the Euphrates “will be buried in their ditches when the time comes” (This along with calls for a second Cyprus are tantamount to signalling the intent to commit war crimes;
- 6) In 2017 the UK Trades Union Congress unanimously passed a motion giving the support of the UK’s 6 million trade unionists to the demands for Öcalan’s release.

Conference believes:

- a) Erdogan and the ruling AKP’s increasing authoritarianism and the direct threat of war crimes in Northern Syria must be challenged by the international community;
- b) Öcalan is key to a peaceful solution in Turkey. He has the support of the Kurdish people as is clearly demonstrated by the fact that over 10 million people signed a petition calling for his release;
- c) The values of Abdullah Öcalan: peace, democracy, equality - are the values of the international Labour movement and it’s our responsibility to show solidarity with Öcalan and the Kurdish people.

Conference resolves:

- i) To call on the international community to stand with the population of Rojava against illegal aggression from the Turkish State;
- ii) To work with the Freedom for Öcalan campaign and other campaigns and apply political pressure on this government and the next Labour government to demand:
  - A) Abdullah Öcalan be released as part of a peace process;
  - B) The Turkish state to obey its own and international laws;
  - C) A peaceful and democratic resolution to be sought between Turkey and its Kurdish citizens;

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- D) The reconvening of peace talks between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK);
- E) That UNISON affiliates to the Freedom for Ocalan campaign.

*Islington*

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### 94. No War On Iran - Troops Out of Iraq

Conference condemns the assassination of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani by a drone strike ordered by Donald Trump.

The act was carried out in Baghdad, violating all agreements with the Iraqi government. Both Iran and Iraq are likely to retaliate.

When Iran said they would retaliate, Trump responded by threatening to attack 52 Iranian cultural sites.

Conference notes that the disastrous war in Iraq created a power vacuum in the region that a number of states such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Israel have all tried to fill. It has also seen wars in Yemen, Syria and Libya involving outside powers including the US, UK and Russia. The assassination has only furthered the destabilisation of the region.

Conference believes that Trump has been heading for war since tearing up the nuclear deal with Iran and if he succeeds will create a bigger war than we have seen for years in the Middle East. War with Iran or Iraq will only see further unnecessary deaths. Over one million people are estimated to have died as a result of the 2003 Iraq war.

We must do all we can to campaign for peace and de-escalation in the Middle East.

We are in solidarity with the millions of people demonstrating in Iran and Iraq against the assassination and we support the Iraqi mass demonstrations demanding the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq.

Conference notes that there were further angry marches against the Iranian regime following the tragic shooting down of the Ukrainian aircraft by Iranian missiles which killed hundreds of people. Iraqi workers also continue to protest against their poor living conditions and corruption.

Conference believes neither US imperialism nor the repressive Iranian and Iraqi regimes have the interest of ordinary workers at heart and therefore cannot bring peace to the region.

We stand with the workers and youth in their independent trade unions and organisations fighting oppression, poverty and war.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign to support the withdrawal of UK troops from Iraq- about 400 are stationed there- and of UK helicopters and gunships;

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- 2) Campaign to prevent the UK playing any role in further supporting US escalation in the region;
- 3) Campaign for the withdrawal of US troops from the region;
- 4) To affiliate to the Stop the War Coalition and encourage branches and Regions to do so;
- 5) To publicise and support Stop the War Coalition initiatives, including public meetings and protests, amongst our members and to take our banner to them. Any war caused by this must not be in our name.

**Southwark**

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### **95. #gotransparent - Solidarity with Garment Workers**

In 2019 after protesting for a raising of the minimum wage, over 10,000 garment workers in Bangladesh were dismissed and thousands faced criminal charges.

Hundreds of workers, including union representatives, were arrested and faced trumped-up charges that could lead to lengthy prison sentences, including life imprisonment.

Knowing where your clothes are made, and who made them, is a vital step in improving working conditions.

Following the repression by factory owners and the government local grassroots organisations and unions were able to help workers by alerting brands that they produced for and work toward a resolution. They were able to do so because many more brands had publicly disclosed the names, addresses, and other information about their factories, making it easier for workers to reach out to them through labour advocates.

But a remaining 3,500 workers still face charges.

But it is not just in Bangladesh that working poverty exists.

In factories in India, Indonesia, Cambodia and more, the people who make our clothes live in poverty, usually earning just half of what they need to meet their basic needs and care for their families.

Garment workers typically earn between 1 and 3 percent of the retail price of an item of clothing.

If a t-shirt costs £8, the worker who made it receives 24p at most. To double this wage would only be another 24p.

Labour Behind the Label (LBL) is a campaign that works to improve conditions and empower workers in the global garment industry and is part of the global network Clean Clothes campaign.

Its ongoing campaigns have led to greater transparency in the garment industry.

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The campaign also seeks to challenge the gender inequality and sex discrimination faced by garment workers, the vast majority of whom are women.

But there is still much to do and LBL is a small resource challenging global corporations.

Conference therefore agrees to:

- 1) Send messages of solidarity to the National Garments Workers Federation (NGWF) and Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation (BRGWF) and Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity;
- 2) Publicise LBL's continuing work on public procurement and the #gotransparent and living wage through transparency campaigns this year , with support in terms of campaigning and circulating petitions;
- 3) Ask UNISON branches to ask sector relevant companies if they publish their supply chain (for example NHS companies (uniforms and related garments)/ schools (uniforms / cleaning uniforms) / etc.;
- 4) Urge branches and regions to affiliate to Labour behind the label;
- 5) Make a donation of £5000 to LBL.

***City of Wolverhampton***

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### **96. Kashmir Crisis**

Conference opposes the law enacted to revoke the special status of Kashmir by the right wing Indian Prime Minister N. Modi. This legislation was followed by the imposition of a curfew, the right to detain prisoners without trial for up to six months, the shutdown of mobile communications networks and the internet. These measures have been imposed to remove Kashmiri's democratic rights including the right to protest. They are also causing considerable hardship.

We reject the Indian Prime Minister's assertion that these measures have been taken to reduce terrorist attacks in India. Of the measures taken, one of them is to remove the law that means only Kashmiri's can own land in Kashmir. This is aimed specifically at opening up the wealth and resources of Kashmir to big business.

We are further concerned that there are reports of atrocities against civilians by the army. We note that the removal of the special status of Kashmir is opposed by many political parties in India, particularly those opposing the forcing of Hindi as a state language.

Conference opposes any intervention by Pakistan state forces. Such an intervention would only be on the basis of asserting the rights of Pakistani big business and landlords over the workers and poor peasants in Kashmir (to divert from IMF led privatisation). This could potentially lead to a military conflict between India and Pakistan, two nuclear powered states. We also oppose the right-wing terror campaigns, some of which are linked to elements in the Pakistani military.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference further notes that the impact of these measures amongst settled populations from the 'Indian Sub-continent' in the UK could be to increase the activities of right wing nationalist and communal forces and raise tensions between different religious communities.

Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Establish links with trade unions in all parts of Kashmir to develop an understanding of the situation on the ground and to assist with solidarity;
- 2) Oppose any violation of democratic rights of the people of Kashmir including supporting a campaign to reverse the revocation of Article 370 and 35A, free political prisoners and end the draconian curfew;
- 3) Ensure that in our work with local communities we make clear that we do not support the position taken by the Indian government nor any intervention by the Pakistan government.

**Camden**

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### **97. Solidarity with Zimbabwean Workers**

The people of Zimbabwe have endured a deep political, economic and humanitarian crisis for well over two decades; subjected to state repression, deepening poverty and denied the right to decent work and public services by a kleptocratic and corrupt government.

Since the mid-1990s Zimbabwe has experienced amongst the highest rates of inflation and unemployment in the world. Public expenditure has been cut drastically, devastating Zimbabwe's public services, which during the first decade of independence were often seen as the best in Africa. Quality of life has deteriorated rapidly for most Zimbabweans as a result of the crisis, forcing millions to leave the country.

In recent months the situation has deteriorated further, as the government has resorted to increasingly oppressive economic measures, which have hit workers and the poorest hard, in particular women, whilst protecting the interests of the elite.

Conference notes that the ITUC has consistently rated Zimbabwe amongst the ten worst countries in the world for workers, with no guarantee of workers' rights. Fundamental rights including the right to organise and freedom of expression are severely curtailed by repressive laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (AIPPA).

Conference congratulates the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) for leading the struggle for workers' and human rights, against an increasingly militarised and repressive government. In October 2018, when workers demonstrated against a transaction tax increase, which would hit the country's already impoverished workforce hard, the government responded by beating workers and arresting the general secretary and president of the ZCTU along with 33 other leading trade unionists.

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More recently, in January 2019, when ZCTU organised a national stay-away, in response to the escalating prices of goods and services, including a 150 percent hike in the price of fuel, police used live ammunition against protestors, killing 12 and detaining at least 200, including the general secretary and president of the ZCTU.

Conference condemns these brutal acts and calls on the government of Zimbabwe to end its use of violent repression against workers and address their legitimate demands.

Conference is deeply concerned that since President Emmerson Mnangagwa took office, following a military coup, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and several governments are already seizing the opportunity to privatise Zimbabwe's dilapidated public services. Conference condemns this ideological attack, which will only further entrench corruption and inequality in Zimbabwe and supports trade union demands for the rebuilding of democratically controlled quality public services.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue campaigning against the persecution of trade unionists in Zimbabwe and for the government to repeal repressive legislation and respect the International Labour Organisation's core conventions;
- 2) Support ZCTU's demands for end to the economic crisis, and for the payment of workers in US dollars instead of worthless bond notes;
- 3) Support demands for the rebuilding of democratically controlled quality public services, and oppose IMF, World Bank and UK government attempts to promote privatisation in Zimbabwe;
- 4) Work with Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) and other groups which support call for democracy, human rights and equality for Zimbabwe.

***National Executive Council***

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### **98. Women in Cuba: 60 Years of the Federation of Cuban Women Under Blockade**

Conference congratulates the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) on their 60th anniversary in 2020, and the Cuban people on the impressive achievements made in health, education and social welfare which have positively impacted on the lives of women in Cuba. We also note that all of these achievements have been made while suffering under the impact of almost six decades of US blockade.

Conference notes that FMC was the first mass organisation set after the Cuban Revolution in 1960 and its work to guarantee justice for women, in the workplace and at home. The FMC has a research wing which provides input into government laws relating to women on issues ranging from employment, health and ageing, to domestic violence, and an education wing which provides training for policy makers and law enforcers. Conference acknowledges that the work of the FMC and the Cuban trade union movement have been fundamental to achieving the gains women have made in Cuba over the last 60 years.

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Conference congratulates Cuba for putting women's empowerment and equality right at the forefront of the Revolution, a legacy which can be seen today. We note that women went from being just 5 percent of the workforce in 1953 to making up almost half today. Today, women hold over 70 percent of education and health care jobs, they are 66 percent of lawyers, 68 percent of university graduates and 52 percent of doctors. Cuba has the second highest percentage of women MP's in the world at 53.2 percent.

We recognise that Save the Children consistently places Cuba first among developing countries for the well being of mothers and children and that the World Economic Forum ranked Cuba 23rd out of 149 countries in its 2018 Global Gender Gap Report. We applaud the commitment to gender equality guaranteed in the nation's constitution and laws. Although health achievements benefit all Cubans - many of the country's acclaimed health policies are specifically directed at women.

Thanks to the work of Cuban trade unions and the Federation of Cuban Women, Cuban women receive 18 weeks of paid maternity leave on 100 percent pay. After that, either parent is eligible for up to 40 weeks of parental leave at 60 percent. Contraception and abortion have been provided freely since 1965, when Cuba became the first country in Latin America to legalise abortion. Cuba's reproductive services and family planning have positive implications for women's health in a continent where free contraception is rare.

Since 1997, there has been a government plan for the advancement of women. As a result, all ministries have a responsibility to ensure their policies advance women's equality and well-being. Each ministry has to report annually to the Federation of Cuban Women on what they have done to meet this plan. A policy which we could learn from in the UK. UNISON expresses its alarm at the Trump administration's recent actions to tighten the blockade against Cuba. These include restricting oil imports, reducing Cuban-Americans ability to visit or send money home to families, limiting US citizen's ability to travel to the island, banning cruise ships from docking in Cuban ports, and implementing Title III of the Helms-Burton Act. Such actions take US aggression and cruelty against Cuba to unprecedented levels.

The decision to implement Title III of the Helms-Burton Act expressly aims to deter vital foreign investment. It could see British companies being sued in the US courts for "trafficking" property nationalised after 1959. Congress considers this an act of economic warfare intended to cause tangible suffering to the Cuban people with the objective of creating unrest and instability.

These new measures are already being felt in Cuba. On top of the shortages and difficulties in obtaining everyday goods, education and medical supplies that the blockade causes, the island is now experiencing fuel and energy shortages as a result of Trump's new measures.

The FMC is clear that the biggest obstacle to women's advancement in Cuba is the blockade. It is Cuban women who bear the brunt of the impact this illegal and cruel US policy in their every day lives since the burden of family care still falls disproportionately upon them.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

UNISON commits to continue to campaign the region for an end to the US blockade, especially the new measures introduced by the Trump administration so that the Cuban women can fulfil their full potential. UNISON supports the UK government voting against the US blockade every year at the United Nations General Assembly. However, it should take concrete measures to sanction British organisations or companies that comply with extraterritorial US blockade legislation over UK sovereign laws.

Conference praises the Cuba Solidarity Campaign's (CSC) work against the US blockade and to build links between Cuban and British workers and to highlight the achievements and work of the FMC in Cuba.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Support and publicise a delegation from the FMC to come to Britain in 2020 to mark their 60th anniversary and explain the impact of the US blockade on women in Cuba;
- 2) Encourage affiliation to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign;
- 3) Call on the US to end the blockade against Cuba and lobby the UK government to take robust action against UK based companies that comply with extraterritorial blockade legislation;
- 4) Continue work alongside other trade unions and the TUC to maintain the strongest possible support for Cuba and the work of the FMC.

*Isle of Wight*

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### **99. Nicaragua - Re-affirming our Links**

For over 40 years, since the 1979 revolution which saw the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship and the coming to power of a Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) government, and the US backed contra wars which sought the overthrow of the FSLN government, UNISON and its predecessors have worked in partnership with the Nicaraguan trade union movement.

Now in 2020, Nicaragua is once again fearing the worst and battering down the hatches against the likelihood of further attempts by the United States to destabilise the country and bring about regime change.

At the same time, emboldened by the success of the US-backed military coup in Bolivia, US-financed Nicaraguan opposition groups are again seeking to cause chaos and destruction in a country which, following the failed attempted coup of 2018, is now enjoying peace, stability and a return to normality.

Trump's declaration last year that, "These events send a strong signal to the 'illegitimate' regimes in Venezuela and Nicaragua that democracy and the will of the people will always prevail. We are now one step closer to a completely democratic, prosperous and free Western Hemisphere", is a clear statement of intent which preceded yet another US led coup in Bolivia.

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This was followed on 25 November with a White House statement characterising Nicaragua as "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States", thus prolonging for an additional year an executive order signed by Trump in 2019 declaring a state of emergency in Nicaragua.

Conference believes that Nicaragua is a threat to no one, that it is in fact a beacon to many.

Along with Cuba it is an example of the peoples of a Latin America country, despite the power waged against them, building their country for the many not the few.

Nicaragua's trade unions are united in their determination to continue to oppose all attempts by the US to undermine Nicaragua's democracy and have vowed to defend Nicaragua's sovereignty, right to self-determination and right to live in peace.

Unfortunately, Nicaragua does not have the same prominence internationally as Cuba, so it is important that as a 'life-long' partner UNISON promotes the Nicaraguan cause.

The role of the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group (NSCAG) is therefore vital, in their continued support to Nicaragua's trade union and community groups by offering solidarity and practical support to them in their efforts to defend the hard-won gains of the past twelve years of the FSLN government.

Conference believes that our support needs to continue and in these uncertain times for Nicaragua that support needs to be re-affirmed.

Conference agrees:

- 1) That the national office writes to all regions and branches outlining the history of our partnership with both Nicaragua and the NSCAG, and to encourage regions and branches to affiliate to NSCAG and to make direct links with the Nicaraguan trade union movement;
- 2) That at least quarterly UNISON finances the translation of the UNE/FNT public services bulletin from Spanish to English and circulates to regions, branches and Branch International Relations Officers.

*City of Wolverhampton*

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### **100.Solidarity with Bolivia**

Late last year right wing groups with the support of the military launched a coup against the elected government of Evo Morales, forcing President Morales into exile.

The coup had the fingerprints of the US all over it and continued the stated aim of the US to remove 'left' governments in south America.

The party of Morales MAS (Movement to Socialism) which holds a majority on the legislative assembly staged a boycott of the assembly.

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Almost immediately a right-wing Senator Jeanine Anez (whose party polled only 4 percent in the recent elections), used the boycott of the national assembly to declare herself President.

Conference recognises that Bolivia has flourished under the presidency of Morales and MAS.

In a country, plundered by capitalists for decades for its vast natural wealth, whilst the needs of ordinary Bolivians were ignored, Morales took the resources under public control and the wealth gained from them was used to build schools, social housing, highways and much more.

The first indigenous president in a country with an indigenous majority ended, after centuries, the domination of a mainly European descended elite bringing equality for indigenous Bolivians and a proper recognition of their culture and tradition symbolised by the introduction of the indigenous multi- coloured Wiphala as the dual flag of the Bolivian nation.

Despite claims to be an interim president, the Anez regime lost no time in reversing the gains made under Morales, symbolically virtually the first act was the removal and burnings of the Wiphala.

Privatisation was also quickly on the agenda.

As was withdrawal from many international organisations such as ALBA and UNASUR both of which have a left of centre outlook.

700 Cuban doctors were expelled from the country.

The regime also requested the help of the Israeli military to train Bolivia's armed forces.

Many MAS supporters were killed in subsequent efforts by the interim government to quell protests.

Despite attempts by the right to exclude MAS from future elections the Bolivian Election Tribunal set the next elections for May 3 this year.

Conference accepts that between the writing of this motion and this Conference much may have changed, but we also recognise certain constants such as:

- 1) The overthrow of Morales was an illegal act;
- 2) That the Movement to Socialism (MAS) has shown by its policies to be the legitimate workers party in Bolivia;
- 3) Should the outcome of the election be a MAS victory, the US and international Capitalism will seek to destabilise it.

Conference therefore agrees to affiliate to an appropriate UK based campaign such as Bolivia Solidarity Campaign.

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Conference instructs the National Executive Council to:

- a) Consider affiliating to the Bolivia Solidarity Campaign;
- b) Seek to make contact and links with the Bolivian Trade Union Centre (COB) and public-sector unions such as CSTSPB (Health) and FENATRAM (Municipal Workers).

*City of Wolverhampton*

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Europe

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### **101.The Risks of Post Brexit Trade Deals**

Conference notes that upon exiting the European Union (EU) the UK now has control over its own trade policy for the first time in over 40 years. The UK government has sought to replicate (roll-over) some of its existing trade agreements that were originally made under its EU membership and at the same time create new trade deals. The UK is also in the process of applying to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in its own right.

Conference further notes that the government passed the EU Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020, which UNISON campaigned against, as it gave MP's no say over the UK's future relationship with the EU, our most important trading partner or a say on future trade deals with other countries – in particular with the USA which conference agrees concerns UNISON the most. Parliamentary scrutiny provisions for MP's to hold the government to account during trade negotiations were all removed during passage of the Bill.

Conference reaffirms its support for UNISON's call for greater parliamentary and civil society scrutiny over trade agreements. International trade agreements are currently covered by the little-known Constitutional Reform and Governance (CRAG) Act which gives the government and Secretary of State for International Trade wide-ranging powers to open, negotiate and conclude trade agreements with very limited parliamentary oversight.

Furthermore, the devolved governments and parliaments of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have no competence over international trade although some aspects of trade agreements could have implications for devolved areas of policy.

Conference further notes that the UK's future trade deals with the EU and USA will affect many areas of public services - including efforts to tackle climate change, food and environmental standards, workers' rights, health and safety regulations, equality and human rights and keeping public services public and out of any Free Trade liberalisation deals.

Conference agrees that any future trade deal should put the interests of workers, families and communities centre-stage. With the EU this means the best way of protecting jobs is through a close relationship with the single market; with a level playing field to safeguard rights, standards and regulations (e.g. employment, equality and human rights, environmental, consumer, digital, public procurement and climate change) now and in the future so that they cannot be weakened in the UK through any future trade deals.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference further agrees that future UK deals based on Free Trade Agreements do not provide the best economic outcome for the UK economy and do not protect UK public services from further global liberalisation. The new generation of agreements are primarily aimed at liberalising the trade in services – including public services, regulating foreign direct investment and reducing so-called “regulatory barriers” to trade.

Conference additionally notes that until recently the EU excluded public services from trade agreements. However, starting with the EU-Canada (CETA) agreement and the stalled EU - US (TTIP) agreement, the European Union opened the way to the inclusion of public services.

Conference continues to support UNISON's response to public consultations on these deals where we called for public services to be explicitly excluded, opposed the inclusion of Investment Chapters and called for binding and enforceable labour rights.

Conference continues to be dismayed however that whilst the USA has, for example, published its negotiating objectives for a UK - USA trade agreement, the UK has not published any documents relating to the negotiations or made its negotiating stance public.

The leaked documents of the ‘UK – USA trade working group’ in December 2019 revealed that "total market access" to the UK's Health service was not completely off the table and there was no agreement to exclude any reference to pharmaceuticals in its negotiating objectives or rule out US companies using courts abroad to gain access to UK public services.

Conference notes in 2019 UNISON put out a briefing to health branches on the dangers to the NHS from a UK-US trade agreement. UNISON also had ‘Don't Trump our NHS’ branded material for the demonstration at the Conservative Party conference. Conference re-affirms UNISON's campaign against US "big pharma" firms trying to change UK rules on drug patents in a way which would significantly increase the cost of medicines to the NHS and UK working families.

Conference also disagrees with the UK government's tight timetable to get the EU - UK future agreement finalised. An inflexible one-year transition period to get ready for Brexit and agree a comprehensive new deal is insufficient and risks taking the UK back to a ‘No Deal’ scenario in December 2020. It also risks getting a deal with certainty done and replaces it instead with an uncertain outcome with only prioritized parts of the deal completed.

Conference also supports the campaign to prevent a quick UK Free Trade Agreement with the EU that then facilitates a further quick Free Trade Agreement with the USA.

Conference therefore urges the government to extend the transition period by July 1st 2020 to maximise certainty and prevent a rushed and botched deal and multiple mini deals with the EU.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Public services must be entirely excluded from the full scope of application of trade and investment agreements. The comprehensive protection of public services must be guaranteed without any loopholes and must clearly take precedence over offensive commercial interests.

Conference believes that now and, in the future,, this will require legal certainty and a reliable safeguard clause to ensure that public services are not covered in deals and that a suitable model clause for the exclusion of public services from trade and investment agreements must be included in all future UK deals.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to campaign for an EU – UK deal that meets all of UNISON’s six tests;
- 2) Continue to work with Labour Link, UK and EU politicians, civil servants such as the DIT, trade union federations (TUC, ICTU and EPSU) and civil society alliances alongside devolved assemblies and regions to get the best EU- UK deal for all UK workers and public services;
- 3) Call for a further transition extension, if necessary, by July 1st 2020 to maximise the certainty in any new EU –UK deal and avert the uncertainty of ‘No Deal’ or a multiple mini deal approach which could damage workers interests and confidence in the UK economy;
- 4) Ensure an overriding priority will remain the protection of our members in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement;
- 5) Campaign with the EPSU, ICTU, TUC and Labour Link alongside our alliances to ensure that any future EU trade deal has a level playing field with a Non regression clause, so that we secure and lock in our existing rights;
- 6) Dynamic alignment clause, so that future alignment is achieved to prevent the UK from falling behind any gains made in the EU;
- 7) Enforcement mechanism clause, to allow workers and trade unions to have direct representation to proper courts and not rely on secret arbitration panels;
- 8) Direct effect clause, where UK laws will mirror EU laws and sit in any new treaty so that they have direct effect;
- 9) Mechanism to allow improvements in UK employment rights above EU standards, which should be a floor;
- 10) Continue to campaign against Free Trade Deals that would lower existing UK standards and regulations and threaten to make the UK a low paid, de-regulated, low tax haven for global business that would fuel a UK global race to the bottom;
- 11) Continue to campaign for all future trade deals to be scrutinised and meaningfully agreed by the UK Parliament and devolved parliaments and assemblies;
- 12) Campaign for the exclusion of all public services from all future trade deals with a suitable model clause and work in solidarity with relevant trade union and global

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

alliances, in particular EPSU and PSI, to achieve this as a global standard for public services.

*National Executive Council*

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### **102. Protecting Northern Ireland in EU/UK future relationship**

Conference notes that the UK has left the EU from 31st January and is now in a transition period during which the EU and UK will negotiate their future relationship.

Conference recalls the unwavering support this union has demonstrated for the peace process in Northern Ireland, including support for the Northern Ireland region in campaigning for the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and in all its campaigns calling for genuine power-sharing government and the full implementation of that agreement ever since.

Conference recognises the incredible efforts of our members in health and social services in Northern Ireland in their industrial action over the lack of pay parity and unsafe staffing levels. Conference recognises that this has led to a return of devolved Government after a 3 year absence.

Conference believes that the UK exit from the EU will have and has already had negative impacts on our members, their families, their communities and on the peace process, including the prolonged absence of a devolved Government. For these reasons, the protection of the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts must remain of paramount importance.

Conference is concerned that whilst the UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement contains measures to avoid a border on the island of Ireland via aligning Northern Ireland with EU rules on customs and goods, it will cause barriers to trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Conference notes further that exiting the EU threatens the key aspects of the peace agreements relating to equality of citizenship and parity of esteem, creating borders between communities that the Good Friday Agreement was meant to bring down.

Conference notes that these protocol arrangements will remain uncertain well into the future, subject to the consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly on an ongoing basis.

Conference is further concerned that the ability of the arrangements outlined within the Protocol to prevent the diminution of rights in Northern Ireland is untested, with significant issues remaining to be resolved.

Conference believes it is vital in defending the interests of our members that UNISON actively influences the course of the negotiations on the EU/UK future relationship.

Conference notes with deep concern the resistance being shown by the UK Government to maintaining a 'level playing field' on workers' rights, equality protections, health and safety protections, environmental and consumer standards, leading to the obvious conclusion that the intention is to erode them. Conference recalls that the UK has not ratified a number of important ILO Conventions designed

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

to protect workers' rights, including Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work.

Conference is further concerned that the UK Government may seek to liberalise public procurement regulations in an effort to make privatisation and outsourcing or public services even easier.

It is vital that post-EU exit these rights and protections are preserved, and if possible, enhanced. In particular, Conference agrees that the devolved administration in Northern Ireland, which uniquely has control over workers' rights and equality protections, should not be forced to dilute any standards by Westminster.

Conference agrees that, in line with the positions adopted by National Delegate Conference 2019, the key objectives of UNISON during this process must remain:

- 1) Protecting the rights of our members from any attempt by the UK to race to the bottom;
- 2) Protecting the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts;
- 3) Maintaining an open border on the island of Ireland.

Conference is also mindful that the UK is seeking to enter into Free Trade Agreements with non-EU member states, particularly the United States of America. Conference notes that Congressional leaders, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have been clear that they will not allow a free trade deal with the UK that compromises the Good Friday Agreement.

Conference supports the Joint Delegation representing trade unions, rights activists and business from Northern Ireland that has already engaged with US Congressional leaders on this basis. Conference supports this engagement being intensified with the clear objective of protecting the Good Friday Agreement, our NHS and our rights.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland membership in particular, to:

- a) Continue to campaign to seek a future relationship between the UK and EU that protects the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and maintains an open border on the island of Ireland;
- b) Continue to engage with both the UK and Irish Governments to ensure that outstanding issues around the protection of rights in Northern Ireland are dealt with via effective mechanisms;
- c) Continue to campaign for a bilateral British-Irish treaty that protects the rights of British and Irish citizens across these islands as part of the Common Travel Area and for the highest standards of equality of treatment for citizens in Northern Ireland regardless of their chosen identity;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- d) Campaign to protect rights and protections from a race to the bottom, ensuring that the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly continue to be able to follow EU standards and that powers are not clawed back by Westminster;
- e) Campaign for the ratification and full implementation through domestic UK law of all ILO Conventions;
- f) Through Labour Link, to press the Labour party to take all actions necessary to protect the Good Friday Agreement in the context of the UK exit from the EU;
- g) Support the Northern Ireland region in its engagement with US Congressional leaders.

### *Northern Ireland Region*

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#### **103. Workers Rights Post Brexit**

Conference notes that the EU Withdrawal Act 2020 failed to include provisions that could guarantee protection for existing workers rights in the UK. Straight after Boris Johnson's General Election victory in December 2019 he deliberately binned the key protections set out in his original Bill and made a u-turn on Theresa May's commitment that all EU laws would transfer into UK laws so that workers rights would not be weakened.

Conference further notes that workers rights protections were stripped out along with health and safety, consumer rights, citizen and human rights and environmental and food standards and regulations.

Conference has grave concerns that the Act mentions workers rights but is deliberately very non-committal in terms of what will happen to UK labour standards after the expiry of the transition period December 2020.

Furthermore, the Act removed the provision that pre-Brexit judgments of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) would continue to be binding on UK courts and only the UK Supreme Court could depart from those judgments. Instead now the Act has provisions which allows other lower courts to depart from pre-Brexit ECJ judgments.

Conference believes that this will create a chaotic "free for all" on workers' rights where the courts potentially could weaken existing workers rights and ignore past ECJ rulings which UNISON members have benefited from. UNISON members have benefited from the EU court's more generous interpretation of employment rights, in particular, the right to paid holidays.

Conference notes the beneficial recent ruling of landmark judgments by the ECJ include the requirement for employers to keep records of all hours worked to comply with the Working Time Directive, and the ruling that employers might not have to factor overtime into holiday pay calculations unless the worker is contractually obliged to work overtime.

Conference believes that the Prime Minister's commitment to protect workers' rights after Brexit has to include upholding this body of important case law on workers' rights or these rights will be continuously challenged and eventually rolled back by

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

exploitative employers and courts with no guidance on what is and is not UK law derived from our past EU rights.

Conference also notes that the government completely removed from the Act the section that obliged Ministers to make a statement when a Minister introduces a bill which relates to EU-derived workers' rights. Originally the Minister would have been obliged to either make a statement that the Bill does not remove, weaken or regress any such rights, or make a statement that, even though it does, the government wants to proceed with it anyway. The Act also included provisions that representatives of workers and representatives of employers would be consulted during both of these processes and the Bill would contain a list of rights that will fall within it.

Conference believes that whilst these proposals were concerned with process only and would do absolutely nothing to stop a regression of rights, nor would they require the government to keep pace with future developments, they at least demonstrated an attempt to address non regression. Now there is nothing, no process or mechanism to prevent regression of workers' rights in any new legislation.

The Tory government has insisted that a standalone Employment Bill will provide that guarantee but Conference recognises that this just replicates proposals made a year ago by Theresa May on workers' rights which UNISON along with the TUC rejected on the grounds they were not sufficient to guarantee protections for existing and future rights. Conference agrees that primary legislation is insufficient to protect existing UK workers rights because they can be overturned and weakened by any future incoming government and courts.

Conference also notes that the revised political declaration on the future EU – UK relationship does refer to a level playing field but it is not binding and the declaration also states that a close economic relationship will not be pursued. There is therefore no mechanism or economic and legal incentive placed in the deal for the UK to protect workers' rights now or into the future.

Conference endorses UNISON's post brexit policy campaign position that if there was going to be sufficient protection for EU workers' rights in the UK, there would need to be two minimum requirements:

- 1) A legally enforceable "standstill" to prevent regression below current standards granted through our previous EU membership;
- 2) A system for guaranteeing continued dynamic alignment with the EU so as to provide for the automatic retention and replication in UK domestic law of:
  - a) Existing EU workers' rights;
  - b) New EU workers' rights subsequently created;
  - c) Modifications to either.

Conference believes that the only way to achieve those protections in a way which means that they can't be taken away by future UK government legislation is through

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legislating for them as binding and enforceable Treaty commitments with the EU in the future EU – UK relationship and trade deal. In this way the level playing field would be secured and the UK's race to the bottom prevented in any future Free Trade Deal.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- i) Continue to campaign for a level playing field in the future EU - UK deal and insert in the treaty deal a non-regression clause, so that we secure and lock in our existing rights before we move to the EU-UK deal
- ii) A direct effect clause, where UK laws will mirror EU laws and sit in any new treaty so that they have direct effect.

### ***East Midlands Region***

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#### **104. Protecting Workers Rights Post EU Exit**

Conference notes with deep concern that when the UK leaves the European Union (EU) and renegotiates a new EU relationship there is a real danger that a right wing Tory government led by Boris Johnson will seize their opportunity to dilute workers' rights including, but not limited to health and safety, anti-discrimination and agency worker rights derived from EU law.

Conference further notes many current employment rights result from case law emanating from the European Court of Justice.

It is vital that post EU exit these rights are preserved, and if possible, enhanced.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) Work with the ETUC, TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU to review employment legislation that may be at risk;
- 2) Work with Labour Link to make sure the Labour Party fully understand the arguments around protecting and improving current employment rights;
- 3) Ensure political lobbying of MPs includes MPs and Lords of all parties, including the Conservative Party;
- 4) Work devolved parliamentary and assembly members to ensure that devolution issues are properly considered and full protections offered to devolved nations;
- 5) Work with our self organised groups so that equalities are at the heart of our response to post-EU exit issues around employment rights and health and safety;
- 6) Develop resources for branches to support them in their campaigning with our members and the wider public on why it is important to protect workers' rights.

### ***North Yorkshire***

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#### **105. Brexit and Black Workers**

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Conference notes in June 2017, Theresa May, finally set out the UK Government's position on the future rights of EU citizens, which on paper offers those who arrive lawfully before BREXIT the chance to build up the same rights to work, healthcare and benefits as UK citizens. However, this offer lack detail, and is likely to be hugely burdensome to implement, does little to alleviate EU citizens' concerns over job security and, may even be unachievable within the timescale indicated.

Conference remains committed to the rights of foreign nationals to remain in this country and full compliance with its international obligations to shelter refugees fleeing war and persecution.

Conference believes that:

- 1) The freedom of movement principle is core to the EU's four freedoms; contrary to rhetoric, migrants are not a drain on society and would contribute hugely ensuring they are given the same rights and opportunities as other citizens;
- 2) All EU and non EU migrants working in the UK should be valued not victimised. They undoubtedly bring important social, cultural and economic contributions to our society and are sought for their skills in a range of essential industries and services.

Conference notes with deep concern the rise of the far right in the west. Resurgence in organised and violent racist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, misogynist and homophobic politics has profound consequences for all workers. Over the past year, the far right has felt emboldened to organise and connect with each other with negative consequences for all vulnerable communities and democratic standards everywhere.

Conference believes that tackling racism and xenophobia must continue to be an urgent priority for our union. Recent polling by the TUC found that over 37 percent of Black workers polled reported that they have been racially bullied, abused or discriminated against. This included verbal abuse; racist comments and jokes; bullying and harassment; physical violence; being singled out and treated differently than their white counterparts.

Respondents said that they felt isolated and reluctant to complain – over 43 percent did not feel able to report their experience of discrimination to their employers and 38 percent did not report incidents of bullying and harassment.

Although Police Scotland reports no increase in hate crimes since the EU referendum, they also acknowledge that often such incidents go unreported and racism is increasingly a common experience for many Black communities.

Conference calls on the National Executives Committee to:

- a) Continue to highlight the importance of migrant workers in our society and workplaces;
- b) Campaign against the UK withdrawing from the European Convention on Human Rights;

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- c) Campaign that the government fund free legal advice and support for EU citizens in the UK;
- d) Continue vigorously to work on activities promoting human rights.

### *National Black Members' Committee*

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#### **106.Women and Brexit**

Worker's rights threatened by Withdrawal Act Henry VIII clauses

Conference notes the recent unprecedented use of "Henry VIII clauses". These are clauses in a bill that enable ministers - the government executive rather than elected sovereign parliament - to amend or repeal provisions in an Act of Parliament using secondary rather than primary legislation.

This is done by using Statutory Instruments, which are subject to limited parliamentary scrutiny. It has been called a government 'power grab' because it gives some unlimited powers to the Executive government to change laws and is less democratic and transparent than the use of using primary legislation where MPs and civil society can debate, scrutinise and propose amendments to Bills.

The expression is a reference to King Henry VIII's supposed preference for legislating directly by proclamation rather than through Parliament.

Conference further notes that whilst both the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and the EU Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020 include extensive use of Henry VIII clauses in order to transpose existing EU laws to UK laws, Boris Johnson's Withdrawal Agreement extended the use of these powers even further whilst at the same time removing clauses from the Bill that would provide protections of our workplace and equality rights by guaranteeing a 'Level Playing Field' in the future EU – UK Treaty.

The excessive use of legislating by statutory instrument means the government can avoid the proper democratic process of parliamentary scrutiny if the government attempts to weaken, remove or regress our existing rights from the EU. This poses a significant risk for our workplace and equality rights that unions and other groups have fought hard for.

Conference notes that on the 3rd of February 2020 Boris Johnson published the UK – EU negotiating mandate where it was made very clear that he is only going to offer extremely limited protections on our existing employment rights and other social, equality and human rights.

From March 2020 we will have to campaign to prevent him from negotiating a treaty which will likely facilitate the lack of future security of our employment and equality rights that benefit all of us, but most particularly low paid and part-time members.

Conference agrees that now more than ever before UNISON must be at the forefront of opposing all attempts by the Tories to use this power grab to take away our rights. We need to double down and fight against any attempts to undermine the safety, financial security and wellbeing of our members.

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Conference further notes that all three national parliaments in the UK have rejected the government's Withdrawal Agreement and committed themselves to remaining aligned with the EU's standards and rights. Whilst technically N. Ireland will remain 'aligned' with the EU as set out in the Withdrawal Agreements Irish protocol the UK government still has excessive Henry VIII powers over some Irish legislation and has not yet set out how alignment with the EU will be maintained as the rest of the UK begins to diverge.

We are particularly concerned about the risk to TUPE, holiday pay, equal pay, equal treatment, equal pension rights, maternity rights, carers' rights, health and safety at work, protection from sexual harassment at work, flexible working and part time and agency workers' rights. European law underpins many of these rights.

Conference notes that all these issues have been the subject of intense and lengthy negotiations within service groups and many bitter battles have been fought with employers over equal pay, including UNISON's recent spectacular victory at Glasgow City Council.

EU law has been a fundamental backbone to some of our key campaigns for rights at work assisting us with our ability to organise and champion those rights as trade unionists.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with service groups to monitor and campaign against the excessive and unnecessary use of the Henry VIII in Post- Brexit legislation and trade deals and for the restoration of primary legislation and parliamentary scrutiny;
- 2) Work with UNISON's campaign partners such as the Trade Justice Movement, the TUC, EPSU and the ETUC, to campaign in the future EU – UK Trade deal (and other trade deals) for existing UK labour and equality rights to be protected and maintained through non regression, clauses, direct effect and dynamic alignment;
- 3) Work with regions and branches to raise awareness of the impact of any proposed legislative changes, that would potential weaken our existing rights, amongst the membership, particularly women, and encourage them to lobby against the proposals.

### *Northumberland Tyne and Wear Health*

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#### **107.Women's Rights Threatened by Withdrawal Act Henry VIII Clauses**

Conference notes the recent unprecedented use of "Henry VIII clauses". These are clauses in a Bill that enable ministers - the government executive rather than elected sovereign Parliament - to amend or repeal provisions in an Act of Parliament using secondary rather than primary legislation.

This is done by using Statutory Instruments, which are subject to limited parliamentary scrutiny. It has been called a government "power grab" because it gives some unlimited powers to the government to change laws and is less

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

democratic and transparent than the use of using primary legislation where MPs and civil society can debate, scrutinise and propose amendments to Bills.

The expression is a reference to King Henry VIII's supposed preference for legislating directly by proclamation rather than through Parliament.

Conference further notes that whilst both the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and the EU Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020 include extensive use of Henry VIII clauses in order to transpose existing EU laws to UK laws, Boris Johnson's Withdrawal Agreement extended the use of these powers even further whilst at the same time removing clauses from the Bill that would provide protections of our workplace and equality rights by guaranteeing a "level playing field" in the future EU – UK Treaty.

The excessive use of legislating by statutory instrument means the government can avoid the proper democratic process of parliamentary scrutiny if the government attempts to weaken, remove or regress our existing rights from the EU. This poses a significant risk for our workplace and equality rights women have fought hard for.

Conference notes that on the 3 February 2020, Boris Johnson published the UK – EU negotiating mandate where it was made very clear that he is only going to offer extremely limited protections on our existing employment rights and other social, equality and human rights.

From March 2020 we will have to campaign to prevent him from negotiating a treaty which will likely facilitate the lack of future security of our employment and equality rights that benefit women, particularly low paid and part time women in the workplace.

Conference agrees that now more than ever before, UNISON, the union with over a million women members, representing the largest women's movement in the UK, must be at the forefront of opposing all attempts by the Tories to use this power grab to take away our rights. We need to double down and fight against any attempts to undermine the safety, financial security and wellbeing of women.

Conference further notes that all three national parliaments in the UK have rejected the government's Withdrawal Agreement and committed themselves to remaining aligned with the EU's standards and rights. Whilst technically Northern Ireland will remain aligned with the EU, as set out in the Withdrawal Agreement's Irish protocol, the UK government still has excessive Henry VIII powers over some Irish legislation and has not yet set out how alignment with the EU will be maintained as the rest of the UK begins to diverge.

We are particularly concerned about the risk to TUPE, holiday pay, equal pay, equal treatment, equal pension rights, maternity rights, carers' rights, women's health and safety at work, protection from sexual harassment at work, flexible working and part time and agency workers' rights. European law underpins many of these rights.

Conference notes that all these issues have been the subject of intense and lengthy negotiations within service groups and many bitter battles have been fought with

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employers over equal pay, including UNISON's recent spectacular victory at Glasgow City Council.

EU law has been a fundamental backbone to some of our key campaigns for rights at work assisting us with our ability to organise and champion those rights as women trade unionists.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with service groups to monitor and campaign against the excessive and unnecessary use of the Henry VIII in Post- Brexit legislation and trade deals and for the restoration of primary legislation and parliamentary scrutiny;
- 2) Work with UNISONs campaign partners, such as, the Trade Justice Movement, the TUC, EPSU and the ETUC, to campaign in the future EU – UK Trade deal (and other trade deals) for existing UK labour and equality rights to be protected and maintained through non regression, clauses, direct effect and dynamic alignment;
- 3) Work with regions and branches to raise awareness of the impact of any proposed legislative changes, that would potential weaken our existing rights, amongst the membership, particularly women, and encourage them to lobby against the proposals.

*North Yorkshire*

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Northern Ireland

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### **108.New Decade Must Have Genuinely New Approach in Northern Ireland**

Conference notes the return of devolved Government in Northern Ireland under the 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement. Conference pays tribute to the courageous stand of our members in health and social services whose sustained industrial action led to the return of Stormont.

Conference is disturbed however by the failure of the UK Government to clearly support the new institutions with the significant funding and investment in public services that is required. Conference notes that a decade of Tory austerity has meant that day-to-day spending on public services in Northern Ireland is now £600 million lower than it was in 2010. Despite the funding secured for public services as part of the DUP-Tory Confidence and Supply deal, key public services in health, social care, education, housing, infrastructure and the community and the voluntary sector remain underfunded by billions. Our members, their families and their communities continue to bear the brunt of this sustained failure to genuinely invest in developing our public services.

Conference acknowledges that a significant factor in the previous collapse of devolved Government in Northern Ireland was the failure to implement key rights and equality measures. Conference repeats our demands for the full implementation of all rights and equality commitments in Northern Ireland.

Conference recognises the efforts of our members in Northern Ireland in campaigning for a return of genuine power-sharing devolved Government within a

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framework of equality and human rights. Conference welcomes the long overdue moves to implement marriage equality and women's reproductive healthcare rights and recognises the efforts of our members and their allies across civic society in ensuring these rights were delivered in the absence of Stormont.

Conference endorses fully the Equality Coalition 'Manifesto for a Rights Based Return to Power Sharing' (2019) on this basis. Conference notes that the Coalition is co-convened by UNISON and the Committee on the Administration of Justice and consists of dozens of civil society organisations, trade unions and the ICTU.

Conference notes that this manifesto called for a rights based return to power-sharing centred on three key elements:

- 1) Full implementation of the rights provisions of the peace settlement, including the Bill of Rights;
- 2) Implementing international obligations and addressing 'rights deficits';
- 3) Ensuring power is 'working within the rules' so as to prohibit discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

Conference agrees that the new Executive and Assembly must deliver against this manifesto on the basis of equality, rights and respect for all.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to support the Northern Ireland membership in an ongoing campaign:

- a) Calling on the UK government to honour its commitments and make the necessary resources available for public services in Northern Ireland to reverse years of cuts and under-investment;
- b) Calling on all parties in the new Executive to genuinely share power and deliver rights and equality for all within society in line with the Equality Coalition 'Manifesto for a Rights Based Return to Power Sharing'.

### *Northern Ireland Region*

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#### Equalities

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#### **109. Protecting Migrant Workers' Rights**

Conference notes that with EU exit comes yet another change to the UK's immigration rules. The UK government's proposals will see the end of EU/EEA freedom of movement and the imposition of a more draconian and racist system on all migrant workers. Proposals for short term, temporary visas for supposedly 'low skill' work, will lead to poverty and exploitation for low paid migrant workers and be devastating for service users.

Conference is deeply concerned that the debate around immigration continues to call low paid work 'low skill'. If the government plans to call workers earning less than £30,000 p.a. 'low skilled' and consequently impose punitive conditions on migrant workers earning below that threshold, it will be disastrous. The Westminster government proposes such workers be given one-year visas and then be forced to

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leave the country without the ability to renew their visa or return for many years. This will simply create a highly vulnerable and exploitable workforce at the mercy of the most unscrupulous of employers. It will also leave them vulnerable to slipping into becoming undocumented. Essential public services and those who depend on them will also suffer. There are employers willing to work with UNISON to protect staff and these should be encouraged.

Conference notes with concern that many EU citizens will not have applied for settled status by the end of this year; they will automatically become undocumented and vulnerable to deportation. They will also have to rely on virtual, not physical documentation. This adds further burdens in accessing public services, both for service users and for public service workers who are now asked to administer ID checks for access to vital public services. Conference believes people should be entitled to clear physical documentation of their status that they can keep. Furthermore, UNISON would support a reciprocal freedom of movement arrangement as part of an EU-UK future agreement.

Conference condemns the 'hostile environment' which requires public service workers to act as immigration guards, administering a highly complex immigration system, judging a myriad of complex paperwork to determine access to public services, including vital healthcare. Conference also condemns the forced deportation flights that took resumed in February 2020.

Conference is alarmed that restrictions to healthcare has led to loss of life, with the Government admitting in February 2019 that at least 22 people were incorrectly asked to pay for the full cost of healthcare before treatment. This includes urgent cancer care and cardiac surgery. Conference welcomes the advice produced for all health branches highlighting UNISON's opposition to up-front charging and highlighting vital safeguards for patients.

Conference is alarmed at the situation of low paid workers on Tier 2 visas faced with ever increasing immigration fees and charges. Some have contacted UNISON due to the financial hardship they experience with the costs of the health surcharge fee, which must be paid years in advance when visas are renewed, often costing thousands of pounds at a time. This includes low paid health workers who provide care for all but are placed in financial difficulties when accessing care for themselves and their families.

Conference fears that migrant workers will in future be placed in yet more precarious positions within the workplace, within our communities, when accessing public services and when trying to access rental accommodation and financial services.

Conference affirms its continuing solidarity and concern for the victims of the 'Windrush' scandal. Conference notes that to date, the independent inquiry into the scandal still has not been released, though leaks from the findings indicate a series of failures from the Home Office including a failure to counter racist discrimination.

While 'Windrush' might slip from media interest, UNISON will continue to campaign and fight for justice, restitution and a proper Windrush Compensation scheme.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference asserts that the only real answer to low pay and exploitation for all workers is stronger employment rights protections, stronger collective bargaining and trade union solidarity against racism. Conference further asserts that the trade union movement must stand at the forefront of tackling racism in the workplace and in our communities and fighting for the rights of all workers.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign to support the rights of migrant workers, working with the union's migrant worker networks;
- 2) Help branches and service groups bargain and negotiate for migrant workers with employers;
- 3) Continue to promote UNISON's guide to EU Settled Status and brief activists;
- 4) Continue our campaign against the hostile environment and the imposition of immigration duties on public service workers;
- 5) Work with groups supporting migrant workers such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI), the Migrant Rights Network, the 3million (and their Settled charity), Refugee Action and the Refugee Council to advocate for a rights based approach to migrant workers, and humanitarian support and decent treatment for refugees and asylum seekers;
- 6) Promote awareness of UNISON's free immigration telephone advice line for members provided by Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI);
- 7) Continue our campaign for justice for the Windrush Generation and a proper compensation scheme;
- 8) Continue to support the TUC's march to mark UN anti-racism day.

***National Executive Council***

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### **110. Still Fighting for Equality**

Conference notes that since the landmark 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and the 1976 Race Relations Act, and the subsequent legislative victories won for disabled, LGBT+ and other people with protected characteristics such as age and religion or belief, we are still fighting for true equality. Women, Black people, disabled people, LGBT+ still face concrete ceilings in the workplace and discrimination within our communities. The gender and ethnic minority pay gap, inaccessible workplaces, harassment and bullying, occupational segregation and reduced career opportunities continue to be the everyday experience of too many of our members.

Conference notes that our hard won legal rights are now under attack from right wing groups who now characterise these victories as having gone too far. There have been attempts to use the struggle for equality and justice as a cause for grievance and resentment from those who are perceived as not sharing these protected characteristics, even though these rights benefit everyone.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

UNISON has always been a leader in speaking for equality, justice and fairness in our workplace, our trade union movement and in our society. Conference believes that not only should we defend our gains but we must campaign positively to redress longstanding inequalities and injustices in our workplace. Conference believes our role is needed more than ever as Boris Johnson's Tory government in Westminster seeks to roll back equality and trade union protections.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Campaign with our Self Organised Groups and Labour Link against any legislative attacks on equality rights both in Westminster and in our communities;
- 2) Work with regions and branches to share good practice and ensure equality remains on the trade union bargaining and negotiating agenda;
- 3) Raise these issues with the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ITUC to ensure they are addressed across the trade union movement and the devolved nations.

*City of Sunderland  
Isle of Wight  
North Yorkshire*

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### **111. Protecting Employment Rights for Disabled Workers Post Brexit**

Conference notes the international influence that has contributed to the progressive development of rights for disabled people across the United Kingdom that has strengthened our rights at work since joining the European Union.

Conference noted that Clauses 34 and Schedule 4 contained in the European Union Withdrawal Agreement Bill, in October 2019, provided a level of safeguard for workers' rights in a future UK-EU agreement. Further, that in December 2019 these were removed reducing the ability to protect against regressive employment legislation and the ability to remain in step with any progressive EU employment legislation changes in the future.

Conference recognises the progressive protections that the Equality Act 2010 has given workers in the United Kingdom.

Conference recognises the vulnerability of workers across the UK where there is no commitment within any Agreement to maintain existing EU workers' rights in the future. In particular, including the protections that disabled workers currently benefit from.

Conference draws attention to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a human rights treaty that reinforces a minimum standard of participatory rights for disabled people; which all EU member states, including the UK, have signed up to. In particular, Article 27 of that Treaty relating to employment.

Conference is concerned the UK's withdrawal from the EU could affect progress towards the UK meeting its obligations under Article 27 including its commitment to the employment target set.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 1) To seek to shape the proposed Employment Bill being brought forward by the UK government to contain provisions that protect current EU workers' rights, and including a commitment to incorporate any progressive future EU workers' rights in UK domestic law;
- 2) To influence cross party commitment to fulfilling the obligations of Article 27 of the UN Treaty, and including current commitments from the UK, and devolved governments, to current employment targets and timescales set.

*South Lanarkshire*

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### **112. Not Just a Bit of Banter: Tackling Sexual Harassment of Disabled Women in the Workplace**

Conference recognises the work UNISON has been undertaking to lift the lid on the scandal of sexual harassment in our workplaces. This includes:

- 1) Working with the TUC on the trade union led #UsToo campaign;
- 2) UNISON's own #ustoo campaign;
- 3) Conducting research into women members in Health and the sexual harassment they experience;
- 4) Producing a new Sexual Harassment guide and model policy that activists can use as the basis of negotiating with employers;
- 5) Developing training for our reps to give them the skills to challenge sexual harassment in the workplace.

As is the case in other types of violence against women, sexual harassment is inextricably linked with power and attempts by (mostly male) perpetrators to disempower women they see as less powerful or who they want to undermine to enhance their own status in the workplace. For disabled women this power imbalance is often even more pronounced, leading to higher rates of sexual harassment.

However, Conference notes that there is a lack of specific data on disabled women's experience of sexual harassment in UK workplaces. Nonetheless a Women's Aid report found that disabled women were twice as likely to experience gender-based violence compared to non-disabled women due to discrimination relating to both gender and disability. The TUC's ground-breaking research 'Sexual harassment of LGBT people in the workplace' also highlights that disabled lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) women respondents reported significantly higher levels of sexual harassment than non-disabled respondents. Disabled women respondents were:

- a) Around twice as likely to report unwanted touching (50 percent disabled women compared to 26 percent non-disabled women);
- b) More than twice as likely to report sexual assault (38 percent compared to 14 percent);

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- c) Six times more likely to experience serious sexual assault or rape (24 percent compared to 4 percent).

Although research is sparse, learning disabled women are likely to be even more at risk from sexual harassment and face greater barriers to reporting and being believed.

Conference strongly believes that more research is needed into disabled women's experience of workplace sexual harassment. This includes acknowledging the experience of Deaf women who face specific barriers to reporting harassment at work.

Conference regrets that, despite the widespread nature of sexual harassment in the workplace, in 2013 the government reduced protections for workers by repealing Section 40 of the Equality Act 2010 which ensured employers had a duty to address harassment by third parties, such as clients, contractors and members of the public.

Conference welcomes UNISON's involvement in the TUC's #ThisIsNotWorking campaign, calling for an anticipatory legal duty for employers to take all reasonable steps to protect workers from sexual harassment and victimisation.

Conference believes that the needs of disabled women must be acknowledged and fully included when it comes to UNISON's policy and campaigning work on sexual harassment.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council, working with the National Disabled Members Committee, National Women's Committee, Labour Link and relevant campaigns where appropriate, to:

- i) Undertake research on sexual harassment which includes the experience of disabled women including deaf women;
- ii) Seek to ensure UNISON guidance on challenging sexual harassment and negotiating zero tolerance policies, and UNISON's training for activists, includes acknowledgement of the disproportionate impact of sexual harassment on disabled women in the workplace;
- iii) Promote UNISON's guidance on sexual harassment at work;
- iv) Seek to ensure that disabled women are highlighted in UNISON's campaigning work on sexual harassment;
- v) Continue to lobby for the third-party harassment provisions in the Equality Act 2010 to be reinstated and for a new anticipatory duty on employers;
- vi) Campaign for accessible workplace sexual harassment reporting mechanisms, including text, videophone and British Sign Language services.

***National Disabled Members Committee***

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**113. Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW)  
Against Women**

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) outlaws both direct and indirect discrimination between women and men in all aspects of life, including the work place and the media.

CEDAW provides a framework for States to take responsibility for tackling discrimination against women and achieving substantive equality for women in both the private and public spheres. It outlines a comprehensive set of rights for women.

Unlike most other legislation, the Convention is solely concerned with the position of women.

CEDAW was ratified by the United Kingdom in 1986.

When a State ratifies a convention they commit to the articles and procedures within it. When the UK ratified CEDAW, it committed to eliminate discrimination against women in all aspects of life and to protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of women under all circumstances, yet there still is no substantive equality between women and men in the UK today.

In 2004, the UK acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which is a complaint and inquiry mechanism that allows the Committee to hear complaints from individuals or inquire into “grave or systematic violations” of the Convention. It was through an inquiry that found the UK violates the rights of women in Northern Ireland by unduly restricting their access to abortion.

The UK international law obligations under CEDAW pertain to women’s equality within society, in both the public and private spheres, obligating States to formulate policies, laws and programmes to advance women and promote substantive equality (equality in outcome, not only equality of opportunity) as well as from refraining from actions that will put women in a worse position. It includes alleviating economic disadvantage as a result of persistent structural inequality and remedying past injustices that had and continue to put women in a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis men.

CEDAW obligates the Government to respect, protect, promote and fulfil women’s right to non-discrimination and to the enjoyment of equality with men. It addresses women in an intersectional way.

The UK has repeatedly reiterated its commitment to the obligations contained within CEDAW and the General Recommendations issued by the CEDAW Committee at international and national fora, taking an active part in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) each year (with Government Ministers in attendance). However, realisation or implementation of the rights contained within these and related documents can be (and has been) described as patchy.

Conference notes that continued discrimination against women and girls in many aspects of life, made worse by the disastrous austerity measures, must be tackled. Austerity measures have impacted on the lives of women from all backgrounds, but particularly women with disabilities, from the Black communities, older and younger women.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Continue to challenge all forms of discrimination against women;
- 2) Campaign to transpose the provisions of CEDAW into domestic law;
- 3) Work with relevant bodies, where necessary, to transpose the provisions of CEDAW into domestic law;
- 4) Call on the government to pass a separate Act of Parliament (similar to the Human Rights Act) or incorporate CEDAW provisions into the Equalities Act 2010;
- 5) Call on the government to ensure full implementation of the new Act or new provisions within the Equalities Act 2010 (as amended);
- 6) Call on the government to ensure effective and sustained monitoring of the implementation of the new Act or new provisions in the Equalities Act 2010.

### ***Cymru/Wales Region***

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#### **114. Defending and Progressing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus (LGBT+) Inclusive Education**

Conference welcomes the introduction of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) inclusive relationship education in primary schools and relationship and sex education (RSE) in secondary schools, which forms part of the Department for Education's statutory guidance. Conference notes these guidelines cover disabled pupils in mainstream schools, Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs) and extend to special schools.

Conference is concerned by the targeted protests at some schools by religious and right-wing campaigners who oppose LGBT+ inclusive education. During 2019, action escalated to regular large protests outside the gates of one school which was a focal point in the media, but challenges to schools in various areas about LGBT+ inclusive education had been growing for some time.

Conference condemns the levels of intimidation and hatred being displayed at some school gates and against school staff. Such hatred causes distress, and has a negative impact on all those, including children, parents/carers and school staff, who experience it.

Much of the media coverage focussed only on opposition from some people in the Muslim community, although similar opposition has also been voiced by some people in Christian, Jewish, and other faith communities as well as by people not belonging to a faith community. The media coverage has helped the far right to present it as a 'clash' between Muslim people and LGBT+ people, and they are using LGBT+ rights to attack Muslims as part of their Islamophobic agenda.

Further concerns arise as a number of fringe groups are organising as a coalition. These include 'Stop RSE', 'Parent Power', 'The Values Foundation' and 'The School Gate Campaign' who challenged policies and teaching at hundreds of schools and

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

attempt to increase tensions by using misinformation. Some of these groups include anti-trans activists.

Conference firmly believes that all public services, including education, must be inclusive of LGBT+ people. It welcomes the “No Outsiders’ programme which addresses inclusion of people in all equality strands, ‘Time for Inclusive Education’ in Scotland and Barnardo’s Positive Identities Service, which are examples of best practice in inclusive education.

Conference is disappointed that a small number of Labour Party members have been less than supportive, including someone who at the time was a Labour MP who increased the level of pressure on one school last year by telling demonstrators he backed them, saying they are right. It is essential that Labour politicians in particular stand up for LGBT+ inclusive education in line with Labour Party policy. Conference therefore welcomes the introduction of LGBT+ Labour’s LGBT+ Inclusive Education Toolkit for Councillors.

Conference reaffirms our union’s commitment to anti-racist solidarity and tackling the far right. We are committed to building solidarity and unity against prejudice, discrimination and division and are united in the fight against racism, Islamophobia, fascism and austerity.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council, working with the National LGBT+ Committee and other parts of the union as appropriate, to:

- 1) Raise awareness of the importance of LGBT+ inclusive RSE;
- 2) Encourage branches and regions to respond in line with UNISON policy where there is public opposition over LGBT+ inclusive education, including providing support and guidance for members directly impacted by demonstrations;
- 3) Work with appropriate organisations including the Trades Union Congress to campaign for and promote LGBT+ inclusive education;
- 4) Continue supporting appropriate anti-racist and anti-fascist trade union campaigns and organisations to build a united fight against LGBT+ phobia, Islamophobia and racism.

### ***National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee***

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#### **115. Stand Up To LGBT+ Hate Crime**

Conference notes:

- 1) That figures in the Home Office report ‘Hate Crime in England and Wales 2018/19’ showed recorded transgender identity hate crimes rose by 37 percent (to 2,333) and hate crimes linked to sexual orientation rose by one quarter (to 14,491) compared to the previous year;
- 2) That although some few incidents, such as the brutal attack on two women on a London night bus in May 2019, and the violent attack on journalist Owen Jones in August, have been widely publicised, there is generally little media coverage of anti-LGBT+ hate crimes;

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 3) Anti- LGBT+ prejudice has also become more prominent through the campaigns against LGBT+ inclusive relationship education in primary schools - including the protests outside some primary schools in Birmingham, Manchester and elsewhere - and LGBT+ inclusive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary schools;
- 4) That there have been a number of successful protests against LGBT+ attacks, such as those in Liverpool, Manchester, and the 'Stand up to LGBT+ Hate crime' Kiss-in and vigil in London last August.

Conference further notes that ILGA-Europe's annual review 2020, which details the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people in countries across Europe and Central Asia, identifies a sharp rise in anti-LGBTI speech by public figures in countries ranging from Bulgaria, Poland and Turkey, to Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Portugal and Spain. It also shows that there has been an equally sharp increase in online hate-speech and physical attacks on LGBTI people.

Conference believes that:

- a) Education, including relationship education in primary schools and RSE in secondary schools, must be LGBT+ inclusive;
- b) It is important for our union to support, where appropriate, events organised to show opposition to bigotry, such as protests against attacks on LGBT+ people and demonstrations in support of LGBT+ inclusive education;
- c) The struggle against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia should be linked to the struggle against all forms of racism including Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism. We cannot allow the bigots to divide us.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- i) Circulate the UNISON guidance "Tackling hate crime and hate incidents: a workplace issue" to all branches;
- ii) Support and promote National Hate Crime Awareness Week and urge regions and branches to facilitate or support hate crime awareness events;
- iii) Encourage regions and branches to support, where appropriate, events organised to show opposition to bigotry, such as protests against LGBT+ hate crimes and demonstrations in support of LGBT+ inclusive education.

***Lambeth***

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### **116.Stand Up To LGBT+ Hate Crime**

Conference notes:

- 1) That reports to the police of anti-LGBT+ hate crime in Britain have increased 144 percent from 2013/14 to 2017/18. In May, 2019 Melania Geymonat and her partner Chris were brutally attacked on a London nightbus in a homophobic attack. In August, left wing journalist Owen Jones was also violently attacked after a night out. A disturbing trend has developed in 2019;

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- 2) That transphobic hate crime has trebled over the same period;
- 3) In Britain, LGBT+ prejudice has also been more prominent through the campaign against LGBT+ inclusive education and RSE in schools with protests outside some Birmingham primary schools. Anti-LGBT+ inclusive education leaflets have also been distributed in some East London primary schools;
- 4) That internationally LGBT+ people have come under attack after the electoral success of right wing politicians, for example, the US, Brazil, Poland, Russia and Turkey. In some cases these attacks are also the result of the growth of the far right/fascist movements;
- 5) The successful protests against LGBT+ attacks in Liverpool, Manchester and the recent kiss-in in Parliament Square, London, in August.

Conference believes:

- a) The rise of right wing politicians like Johnson, Trump and Bolsonaro have emboldened bigots everywhere and made them more confident to physically attack LGBT+ people;
- b) Whenever attacks against LGBT+ people occur there needs to be a counter protest to oppose the bigots. This can unite our forces and marginalise the bigots;
- c) Age appropriate LGBT+ inclusive education and RSE should be supported in British schools;
- d) The struggle against homophobia/biphobia and transphobia should be linked to the struggle against all forms of racism including Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism. We cannot allow the bigots to divide us;

Conference resolves to:

- i) Encourage branches and regions to support protests against LGBT+ attacks, informing members about them and bringing the union banner;
- ii) Affiliate to Stand Up To LGBT+ Hate Crime and support its activities and mobilisations.

***London Fire Brigade***

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Racism

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### **117. Unite Against State Racism**

Conference notes:

- 1) In August 2019, the government of Boris Johnson announced plans to increase the ability for the police to carry out stop and search under section 60 powers despite the government's own figures show that Black people were nine times more likely to be stopped and searched in England and Wales in 2017/18;

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 2) The report by the monitoring group Tell Mama that Islamophobic incidents rose by 375 percent in the week after Boris Johnson compared veiled Muslim women to “letterboxes”;
- 3) Plans by the Tory government to end free movement for EU citizens “from day one” after a no-deal Brexit and increased obstacles and uncertainties facing EU citizens who already live and work in the UK;
- 4) The 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts which sought to turn local government workers, NHS staff and landlords into check immigration statues and deny access to work, accommodation and vital services to those deemed “illegal”. This has directly led to the scandal of members of the Windrush generation facing deportation, denial of access to healthcare or loss of employment;
- 5) Strong evidence that the use of Schedule 7 to the Terrorism Act 2000 to stop, search, question and search for up to 6 hours any person at UK ports is based on religious and racial profiling of Muslims.

Conference believes:

- a) The government is determined to increase a “hostile environment” for Black people, Muslims, migrants by ramping up racism;
- b) We need unity to combat all forms of racism. If one form of racism increases, it increases the danger of all forms of racism growing. An injury to one is an injury to all;
- c) Together with seeking to unite all victims of racism against every form of racism, we must seek to encourage and empower white workers to oppose racism alongside us based on both the horror of racism but also on the basis that racism weakens working class organisation and unity.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to work within UNISON structures to:

- i) Call for the repeal of the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts and oppose all immigration controls;
- ii) Call for the repeal of Schedule 7 to the Terrorism Act 2000;
- iii) Support the continuation of the right of free movement for EU nationals even when Britain leaves the EU;
- iv) Continue to support activities by Show Racism the Red Card and Stand Up to Racism and to encourage UNISON branches to affiliate and attend future events like the Stand Up to Racism demonstrations on UN Anti-Racism Day held in March each year in London, Cardiff and Glasgow.

***National Black Members' Committee***

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### **118.End the Hostile Environment**

Conference notes:

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 1) The Home Office's politically motivated decision to classify thousands of long-term British residents as illegal immigrants, forcing many of them out of their jobs and homes, and in extreme cases resulting in detention and deportation;
- 2) That some residents have been denied necessary health care because of the "hostile environment". One Londoner, who was diagnosed with prostate cancer, was refused NHS medical treatment because of his immigration status and billed £54,000;
- 3) That in early February, the newly elected Tory government re-started flights deporting people to Jamaica;
- 4) That more than a year after the government promised to put right its treatment of the Windrush generation and committed to reform the Home Office, many of those affected by the scandal remain in acute financial difficulties. None of the "hostile environment" legislation introduced by Theresa May when she was Home Secretary has been repealed;
- 5) The lack of clarity about future rights of EU citizens, workmates and members, meaning that many of them are also confronted with a "hostile environment".

Conference believes:

- a) In the free movement of workers, whether it is fleeing war, poverty, the extreme effects of the climate emergency or in search of an improved life;
- b) That migrants contribute to society financially and socially, they are not a drain on resources;
- c) That challenging racism and the "hostile environment" must remain a priority for our union;
- d) That when someone is threatened with deportation, campaigning can work – from the Onibiyo family to Otis Bolamu, we have kept families and individuals safe in this country;
- e) That no member of our union or our community should be deported because of the "hostile environment" or difficulty obtaining settled status.

Conference resolves to:

- I) Support relevant and appropriate campaigns to repeal legislation that created the "hostile environment";
- II) Encourage branches to approach employers and agree a protocol so that any members affected by a Windrush situation is not dismissed. Branches can also work with employers to get agreement that EU citizens are supported in their application for settled status;
- III) Encourage our branches and regions to support UNISON members by any legal means necessary, such as petitions, campaigns, working with organisations like the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, with councillors and MP's, to

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

prevent deportation, dismissal and racist treatment because of the "hostile environment".

*Camden*

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### 119. Resisting the Hostile Environment

Conference notes that:

- 1) The victory of Boris Johnson in the 2019 general election means that we have a prime minister with a proven record of racism;
- 2) The Conservative government intends to push through fresh border clampdowns which will intensify the "hostile environment" for migrants, increasing employer powers;
- 3) Such racism is encouraged by mainstream politicians and media and, in turn, helps boost and legitimise the far right;
- 4) Here, and internationally, racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism are on the rise and we are seeing the scapegoating of migrants, refugees, and Roma people;
- 5) The climate and ecological emergency is now a key driver of migration globally as a result of extreme weather events;
- 6) While there is no room for complacency, trade union and anti-racist campaigning stymied the growth of the racist Football Lads Alliance;
- 7) In Scotland, Love Music/Hate Racism has organised a series of packed music events, including hosting a stage at Doune the Rabbit Hole Festival and, with the University College Union, helped organised a successful speaking and music tour with the artist Lowkey.

Conference believes that:

- a) Trade unions have a long record of challenging racism and fighting for unity both in workplaces and civil society;
- b) Migrant workers play a vital role throughout the economy, particularly in public and caring services;
- c) We must resist any attempts by employers and the government to blame migrant workers and refugees for austerity.

Conference resolves to:

- i) To oppose any attacks on migrant worker and refugee rights;
- ii) To highlight the linkages between the climate and ecological emergency and migrant and refugee rights during COP26-related activities and events;
- iii) To re-affiliate to Stand up to Racism.

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

*City of Glasgow*

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### **120. Jane Haining Memorial and the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz**

UNISON Renfrewshire, as part of UNISON's ongoing campaign against racism and fascism, led a study tour to Krakow and Auschwitz in 2018. A Scottish delegation is taking part in a further study tour in March 2020 involving five branches, supported by the region and national office, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

During the study tour, a service was held outside the block where Jane Haining was housed in Auschwitz/ Birkenau. She is thought to be the only Scottish woman known to have died at Auschwitz.

A farmer's daughter, from Dunscore in Dumfriesshire, Jane worked for over ten years at Paisley's JP Coats thread factory, followed by a brief spell in Manchester, before taking up a position as matron in a girls home at the Scottish Mission to the Jews in Budapest. It is estimated that Jane helped save over 400 Jewish girls from the Nazis.

Jane was captured by the Gestapo and after a short time being held in a prison in Budapest, she was transported to Auschwitz and died shortly thereafter.

UNISON Renfrewshire has been working with Jane's family, Renfrewshire Council, UNISON North West Region, Dunscore Heritage Centre and JP Coats Ltd to highlight the atrocities of the Holocaust and highlight the sacrifice and service demonstrated by Jane Haining. Discussions are underway to have a permanent memorial in Renfrewshire. It is hoped that a cairn, designed by school children in Renfrewshire, will be installed.

As part of the 2019 Sma Shot Celebrations, members of Jane Haining's family carried a banner through the town alongside our Assistant General Secretary for Bargaining, Christina McAnea. A request has been submitted to have a street named after Jane in a new housing estate in Paisley.

UNISON Renfrewshire held one of the National Holocaust Memorial Day Events on 27 January 2020, in the branch office, where tributes were paid to Jane Haining and those lives lost in the holocaust and other genocides around the world. We also paid tribute to Sam McCartney, UNISON co-chair of the Scottish International Committee who recently passed away.

The branch is in the process of producing a DVD and booklet of the Study Tour to be used in schools and local communities.

Conference resolves to:

- 1) Encourage regions to look at the work being done by UNISON North West in highlighting the atrocities of the Holocaust;
- 2) Consider sending delegations on study tours in order to create "living witnesses";

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 3) Ensure, as part of our ongoing work against racism, fascism and antisemitism that the Holocaust is not forgotten.

*Renfrewshire*

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### Civil Rights

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#### **121. Decriminalisation for Safety**

Conference notes that UNISON's policy on sex work, adopted in 2010 on the basis of a motion from women's conference, is to support proposals which decriminalise the selling of sexual services while introducing a 'sex buyers law' criminalising those who purchase those services.

Conference also notes, however, that 2018 UNISON women's conference rejected the motion "Nordic Model Now!" which called for women's conference to affirm its policy of supporting the Nordic Model, a legal model based on decriminalising the selling of sexual services while introducing a 'sex buyers law'.

Conference recognises that the great majority of sex workers are women. Conference also recognises that a significant number of women sex workers identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender plus (LGBT+), and there are many gay, bisexual and trans sex workers who do not identify as women. Sex work is an issue for the LGBT+ community.

Conference notes that national LGBT+ conference has adopted motions at several conferences which:

- 1) Recognise that criminalisation of any kind, including of buyers, increases the risks for sex workers and hinders the global fight against HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome);
- 2) Oppose the introduction of a sex buyers law;
- 3) Reflect the view that sex workers are workers, who should have the same rights and protections as workers in other industries;
- 4) Support the full decriminalisation of all aspects of consensual adult sex work.

Conference further notes:

- a) There have been significant developments since 2010 including Amnesty's 2016 publication of its policy on sex workers, which includes advocating for the decriminalisation of all aspects of consensual adult sex work;
- b) That Amnesty published, alongside its policy, detailed research reports on these issues in Argentina, Hong Kong, Norway and Papua New Guinea. The report on Norway provided substantial evidence that the 'sex buyer law' does not decriminalise sellers, as is often claimed, and details the extensive harm caused to women selling sex by the implementation of the law including forced evictions, deportations and denial of medical care, with Nigerian women particularly targeted;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- c) Full decriminalisation is also supported by many other organisations including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Royal College of Nursing, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, Human Rights Watch, ILGA Europe, ILGA World, and Anti Slavery International. It is also supported by GMB, ASLEF (Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen), UCU (University and College Union), and RMT (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers), and by sex workers organisations;
- d) The recommendations in the 2016 House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee interim report on its Inquiry into Prostitution that the criminalisation of sex workers in England and Wales should end, and that the government should immediately change existing legislation so that soliciting is no longer an offence and amend the laws on ‘brothel keeping’ so as to allow sex workers to share premises rather than having to risk working alone;
- e) Poverty, benefit cuts and sanctions have led to an increase in the number of people working in the sex industry, and the destitution caused by long waits for Universal Credit payments has been a major factor in forcing some people to turn to ‘survival’ sex work to pay their rent and put food on the table;
- f) The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee held an inquiry last year into ‘Universal Credit and Survival Sex: sex in exchange for meeting survival needs’ in response to reports from charities and support organisations across the UK that increasing numbers of people – predominantly women – had been getting involved in “survival sex” as a direct result of benefit changes. In its report, ‘Universal Credit and “survival sex”’, published in October 2019, the Committee states “We heard repeatedly in evidence that the long wait for a first payment is often the cause of people turning, or returning, to survival sex”.

Conference further notes New Zealand decriminalised sex work in 2003. The legislation recognises sex work as work, and it is therefore covered by employment law. Sex workers have the legal right to refuse any client for any reason at any point – the law treats sex workers’ consent as crucial.

The ‘New Zealand model’ has been praised by women’s rights organisations, human rights organisations, and international bodies such as the WHO, as the best legal approach to protect the safety, rights, and health, of people who sell sex.

There is no legal model anywhere in the world that has been shown to increase, or decrease, the number of people who sell sex. All that laws can change is whether people do sex work in dangerous conditions or in safer conditions.”

Conference recognises that decriminalisation is not about ‘encouraging’ sex work – it’s about the safety of people who sell sex. It believes that as a trade union we should be listening to the workers – to sex workers – and should not be calling for laws that put sex workers, including women and LGBT+ sex workers, at greater risk.

Conference therefore believes that UNISON should no longer call for the introduction of a ‘sex buyers law’.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference therefore instructs the National Executive Council to begin a dialogue with the National LGBT+ Committee, National Women's Committee and other appropriate bodies within the union with a view to reviewing and advancing UNISON policy in this area.

### ***National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee***

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#### **122.Decriminalisation for Safety**

Conference recognises that the great majority of sex workers are women. Conference also recognises that a significant number of women sex workers identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender plus (LGBT+), and there are many gay, bisexual and trans sex workers who do not identify as women. Sex work is an issue for the LGBT+ community. Sex work is also a regional issue for a major capital city like London.

Conference notes that UNISON's current policy on sex work, adopted in 2010, supports decriminalising the selling of sexual services while introducing a "sex buyers law" criminalising those who purchase those services. Conference further notes the regional LGBT+ Self Organised Group's long-held concern that the criminalisation of buyers would increase safety risks for sex workers.

Conference notes that National LGBT+ Conference has adopted motions at several conferences which:

- 1) Recognise that criminalisation of any kind, including of buyers, increases the risks for sex workers and hinders the global fight against HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome);
- 2) Oppose the introduction of a sex buyers law;
- 3) Reflect the view that sex workers are workers, who should have the same rights and protections as workers in other industries;
- 4) Recognise that full decriminalisation is also supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Royal College of Nursing, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, Human Rights Watch, Anti Slavery International and by sex workers' organisations;
- 5) Welcome Amnesty's 2016 publication of its policy on sex workers, which includes advocating for the decriminalisation of all aspects of consensual adult sex work;
- 6) Note the rejection by 2018 UNISON Women's Conference of the motion "Nordic Model Now" which called for Women's Conference to reaffirm its policy of supporting the Nordic Model, a legal model based on decriminalising the selling of sexual services while introducing a "sex buyers law".

Conference recognises that decriminalisation is not about encouraging or endorsing sex work – it is about the safety of people who sell sex. It believes that as a trade union we should be listening to the workers – to sex workers - and should not be calling for laws that put sex workers at greater risk.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference therefore recognises that UNISON should no longer call for the introduction of a "sex buyers law" and agrees to work with the National LGBT+ committee to circulate briefings and guidance to branches and regional self-organised groups to raise awareness of the issue.

*Greater London Region*

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Constitutional Reform

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### **123.Campaign for Democracy**

Conference notes with alarm the increasing incidences where the Tory government have shown that they do not support democracy in principle and in practice.

As trade unionists we know that Tory trade union legislation is anti-democratic when it restricts the right of workers to take industrial action and to elect its leaderships by modern methods to increase participation.

Their record of supporting undemocratic and sometimes despotic regimes across the world over many years shows their contempt for the principle of democracy.

Their control over councils shows their contempt for local democracy.

Their decision to prorogue Parliament to limit their accountability to MPs showed contempt for parliamentary democracy.

Recent statements by Prime Minister Johnson and other Cabinet members that they would oppose a second referendum on Scottish independence even if there was a clear democratic mandate at the 2021 Scottish elections shows their contempt for the democratic will of the Scottish people and the right of nations to self-determination.

All of the above demonstrates the undemocratic nature of the Tories and the risks to democracy that their continued role in government poses.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Highlight the threat to democracy posed by this Tory government;
- 2) Raise within our membership the need for strengthening democracy at UK, devolved and local level including continuing to promote the importance of participation in elections;
- 3) Challenge UK government foreign policy wherever it allies with undemocratic regimes;
- 4) Continue to support the rights of nations to self-determination including Scotland.

*South Lanarkshire*

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### **124.No More Government of the Many by the Few**

Conference notes that the UK is one of only three major developed countries to use a First Past the Post voting system for general elections. There is consensus among

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

experts that First Past the Post has a strong right wing bias wherever it is used, leading to parliaments and governments that are on average much more right wing than the voters. This corresponds exactly with the UK's experience. Most votes went to parties to the left of the Conservatives in 19 of the last 20 general elections, yet the Tories have been in power for 63 per cent of this time. Instead of building a society "for the many", this has created one of the most unequal societies in the developed world, with some of the most restrictive trade union laws.

Conference believes we need a government that supports UNISON's values and priorities to reshape society in the interests of workers and our communities. But it is imperative to realise that the current voting system offers no protection against later Conservative governments tearing up these hard fought gains as they have in the past. The world's most equal and progressive societies all use forms of Proportional Representation which prevent rule by a right-wing minority and lock in the hard-won victories of their Labour movements.

Conference recognises that forms of proportional representation are used in the devolved parliaments and that these have produced parliaments that are more representative of the electorate.

Conference therefore resolves:

- 1) To adopt a policy of opposing First Past the Post and instead supporting moves to explore, select and introduce a new voting system for Westminster elections;
- 2) To call on the National Executive Council to campaign for this policy within the wider trade union and labour movement.

***South Lanarkshire***

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### **Efficient and Effective Union**

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#### **Resources**

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#### **125.A Case Form Which is Accessible and Fit for Purpose**

Conference notes that "Member Representation A UNISON Guide" clearly states that: "Before we can give formal advice or assistance to a member on a grievance or disciplinary matter a UNISON case form must be completed."

The current case form is only available to branches as a printed document or a PDF download.

The form is twelve A4 pages long and when giving it to members to complete many find it overwhelming, due in part to length and the relevance of the questions to be answered. The form cannot be completed electronically which causes problems for those with a disability, such as blind or partially sighted members who use screen readers.

The current one size fits all approach does not work well, we need to look again at how cases are documented and produce a case form going forward that is:

- 1) Less overwhelming for members;

## 2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA

- 2) Has a set of questions which are clearly relevant;
- 3) Accessible to all regardless of disability;
- 4) Is available in a range of accessible formats.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to consult with Regions, Branches and Self-Organised Groups with the aim of producing a case form system which is fit for purpose and accessible to all.

*University of Central Lancashire*

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### **126.Caseweb: a Resource for all Branches**

Conference notes that the Caseweb is being rolled out across branches on a voluntary basis. This system allows branches to manage their case files virtually; thus, helping to ensure adherence to GDPR and easier sharing of information and workload between branch stewards.

Conference understands that the cost is £60 per month plus VAT for each branch. Conference also notes that for some branches, including smaller branches this is a significant cost.

Conference asks National Executive Council to look at the costing of Caseweb and consider whether the costing is calculated proportionally, with smaller branches paying proportionally smaller costs than larger, based on number of members in branch. This would reflect other proportional calculations eg number of members attending national conferences.

*Staffordshire University*

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Services to Members

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### **127.UNISON There For Us**

Conference notes with dismay the result of the recent Westminster General Election. The prospect of at least another five years under Boris Johnson and the Tories with their huge parliamentary majority can appear at first glance depressing and disheartening. However, as the UK biggest trade union we should use this as an opportunity to promote and recruit to our union.

Unison Welfare's "There For You" does so much work to help our members and their families in times of trouble. Our branch Welfare Officers across our union deal every day with cases of hardship ranging from debt problems, funeral costs, cost of school uniforms, food and heat poverty. So much of that poverty is hidden with our members wrongly feeling ashamed to admit they need help, often due to in work poverty issues. The impact of grinding in work poverty has a devastating effect on our members and their families' health and wellbeing. Workers having to access foodbanks and clothing banks. The recent changes to bank overdrafts and withdrawal of credit cards will further add worries to our most vulnerable members. We need a campaign which highlights our work in helping our members and raising the issues of why in the 21st century workers find themselves in need of help and assistance from their union. The Tories will try to gloss over these issues we need to highlight them with hard facts and put the blame and shame where it should be.

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and fund a national campaign to promote "There For You" to our members;
- 2) Coordinate and publish findings into the type of issues we have encountered and resolved, by our members' accessing "There For You". This can be used by branches to lobby politicians at local and national level to highlight these issues that affect our members.

***Renfrewshire***

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Conference Administration

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### **128. Making Conferences and Events More Accessible**

Conferences notes that UNISON is one of the largest organisations of Disabled people in the UK with over 200,000 members of our union who meet the definition of disabled under the Equality Act 2010. We have a long and proud history of being at the forefront of the Disability movement and the promotion of the social model of disability where the emphasis should be on how we remove the barriers to disabled people being involved in our union. Conferences are a fundamental part of our democracy as a union and whilst we have made progress in making our conferences accessible to all of our disabled members, we recognise that we need to continually review and improve upon the way that we operate.

Conference recognises that many disabled people have need of access breaks when attending conferences and other events. This may include (but is not limited to) to use toilet and changing facilities, to take medication, to stretch their legs, to have a break from the noise and overwhelming environment, to allow them to concentrate and engage with motions and to have privacy when overwhelmed. However given the way that our conferences are currently structured, disabled members may be disadvantaged from participating in debates because of the lack of an access break.

As a union we should be making reasonable adjustments so disabled members can participate more fully in our union and providing for timetabled breaks will ultimately benefit everyone. There are already timetabled access breaks at the National Disabled Members Conference and some other conferences.

Conference therefore calls on National Executive Council to:

- 1) Work with other appropriate bodies within UNISON to consider how the inclusion of access breaks could be piloted within UNISON conferences;
- 2) Develop and publicise advice on making conferences and events more accessible by timetabling access breaks;
- 3) Investigate further universal support provisions that will make conferences and event more accessible to disabled members.

***Lanarkshire Health***

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### **129. Reasonable Access Requirements for Disabled Delegates in a Passport**

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

Conference, we need to treat delegates to our conferences with the same respect we insist they are treated with in the workplace. Our disabled delegates need to have their access needs met to fairly access conference or meetings, the Equality Act 2010 clearly states this.

A passport would follow the person around insuring their access needs are met without the disabled person having to fill in their access needs for every conference or meeting they go too. To determine these access needs it needs to be a practical and need based questionnaire designed by disabled people for disabled people and it needs to avoid a PIP like questionnaire.

The passport will be holistic and change with the person's needs if they have a degenerative condition. The passport system needs to reflect the adjustments already in place at a person's workplace regarding access needs. If their work place does not reflect a meeting or conference environment then this needs to be taken into account of to not discriminate against them, for example, a care worker not based in an office.

To stop abuse of the passport system would be difficult; however, we need to encourage honesty and integrity in our union colleagues. Explaining that it is about reasonable adjustments and not individual's comfort. It is an essential thing for disabled people to take part as an equal in our democratic system. We acknowledge that there is a cost to reasonable requirements for our union which we all embrace but this needs respecting.

Therefore, Conference, the request for this passport system needs to be put in place in the next 12 months for disabled people who are active in the union or are delegates and visitors to UNISON organised events.

We need to demonstrate we are an inclusive union who takes reasonable adjustment seriously and creates a supportive equal environment for all. Leading the way for inclusion and modelling a system that does not involve disabled people having to request and explain that their reasonable requirements are met every time they want to have equal access to their union.

***Bristol***

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Industrial Action

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### **130.Developing An Industrial Strategy to Win**

Conference notes:

- 1) That for the last two years branches and regions have organised a series of local disputes where UNISON has won;
- 2) These branches and regions are rightly congratulated for organising successful industrial action that delivers results for UNISON members;
- 3) That these victories still only affect a minority of UNISON branches;
- 4) That the scale of the cuts and job losses across the public sector has been severe. In some sectors this has had a greater impact than in others and

## **2020 National Delegate Conference UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

therefore the impact of austerity is different across our union. Some may have experienced a knock to their collective confidence, whilst some have been involved with sectional disputes where UNISON has been successful;

- 5) Smashing through the Tory trade union ballot thresholds is no easy achievement, but the recent victories show it is possible;
- 6) Despite austerity, there are sectors where there are still skill shortages. This has been exacerbated by the relative decline in public sector pay;
- 7) That in the recent sectional strikes, the importance of solidarity and industrial action funds in helping our members sustain strikes and achieve results cannot be understated.
- 8) Political leverage can be a vital weapon, alongside our industrial power, for disputes to win.

Conference believes we should draw upon our collective knowledge and experience involved in recent disputes, as well as the collective power of being in a union with 1.3 million members. Therefore, this union resolves to:

- a) Undertake a review of recent disputes with the aim of producing a document for branches outlining:
  - i) The best methods to motivate members to take collective action;
  - ii) The best methods to win industrial action ballots and smash the Tory ballot thresholds;
  - iii) How to win disputes;
- b) Devise and offer training course to all activists on how to organise industrial action and how to win.

***West Midlands Region  
Sandwell General***

### **Schedules**

Schedule B Members Benefits

#### **1.Schedule B Benefits of Retired Members**

Schedule B 2.2

At the end of the first sentence of paragraph 2.2. of the schedule add:

"and Schedule B paragraph 2.7 and 2.8 providing the accident or fatal accident happens whilst upon union business."

***City of Wolverhampton  
Leicestershire County***

### **Rules**

Rule C Membership

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### **2.Rule C Categories of Membership**

#### **C 2.1**

After existing rule C 2.1 insert new rule C 2.1:

“C 2.1.1 Members of UNISON who are members of another union (in employment covered by Rule C 1), shall not be entitled to stand for election or hold any office under these Rules where, at any time, they promote, support, or undertake organisation or recruitment activities for or on behalf of that other union; and undertake any activity for or on behalf of that other union which is detrimental to the interests of UNISON.”

***National Executive Council***

### **3.Rule C Retired Members**

#### **C 2.6.2**

Delete second paragraph of Rule C 2.6.2

***South West Region***

### **4.Rule C 7 Suspension**

#### **C 7.4.2**

In existing rule C 7.4.2 after “financial irregularities” insert “or where it is necessary to protect other UNISON members”

***National Executive Council***

Rule D Structure of the Union at National Level

### **5.Rule D Structure of the Union at National Level**

D 1.7.1 Delete all after: "National Executive Council"

D 1.8.1.1 Delete all after: "National Executive Council"

D 1.8.1.2 Delete all.

***Liverpool City  
Manchester***

### **6.Rule D Conference Quorum and Procedure**

After D 1.10.2 insert new rule:

"D 1.10.3 Each motion shall contain no more than 500 words (except composites) and each amendment shall contain no more than 250 words."

Then re-number the original D 1.10.3 and all subsequent points.

***West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport***

### **7.Rule D Black Members' Seats**

#### **D 2.4**

Delete “two” in “The period of office shall be two years” and insert “one” in “The period of office shall be one year”

***Neath and Port Talbot County***

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**8.Rule D Disabled Members' Seats**

D 2.6

Delete "two" in "The period of office shall be two years" and insert "one"

***Neath and Port Talbot County***

**9.Rule D Elections**

D 2.7.1

Delete "two years later." and insert "annually."

***Neath and Port Talbot County***

**10.Rule D Service Group Executive**

D 3.5.3

Delete "biennially" and insert "annually"

***Neath and Port Talbot County***

Rule G Branches

**11.Rule G Branches**

Rule G 2.1.1

After "elected annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

Rule G 3.4.2:

After "the coming year" insert "or two years dependent on branch rules"

Rule G 4.1.2:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

Rule G 5.1:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

Rule G 7.1:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

Rule G 8.1:

After "annually" insert "or biennially, dependent on branch rules"

***Neath and Port Talbot County***

Rule I Disciplinary Action and Appeals

**12.Rule I Disciplinary Action**

I 8.5

Delete everything after "for" and replace with "a period not exceeding 24 months."

***Bolton Metropolitan***

***Salford City***

**13.Rule I Disciplinary Action**

I 8.6

Delete after everything "for" and replace with "a period not exceeding 24 months"

***Bolton Metropolitan***

**2020 National Delegate Conference  
UNISON PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

*Salford City*

## **Motions Ruled Out of Order**

Beyond remit of the Conference

### **Protecting Ethical Veganism and other Beliefs against Discrimination**

Conference notes ethical veganism now qualifies as a philosophical belief for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, following the court ruling in January 2020.

Ethical veganism is a belief which has seen considerable growth worldwide, but it is still not fully understood in wider society, and ethical vegans suffer discrimination as consequence.

Ethical veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude – as far as is possible and practicable – all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Protect ethical vegans from discrimination, by ensuring vegan food and drink choices are provided (where such facilities exist), in both the workplace and at UNISON events (conferences, seminars, training courses etc.) up to and including the provision of non-animal derived personal protective equipment (PPE).
- 2) Include 'belief' in the UNISON objectives around bargaining and equalities. The relevant part of this objective should now read 'Actively challenge all forms of discrimination, including racism and sexism; against LGBT+ people: against disabled people and discrimination based on age, religion, belief or social class.'

***UNISON Power***

### **Representation for Managers**

Conference notes that Section 4.1 of "Member Representation: A UNISON guide" details instances "when it is not appropriate to provide representation".

Conference further notes that one of the instances when representation cannot be provided is "in a grievance hearing, a member who is the manager whose decision gave rise to the grievance. Managers cannot expect representation when they simply carry out their functions as a manager."

Conference believes that this provision is unfair to our manager members, some of whom may have been UNISON members for many years, perhaps at a lower level when joining; who may be carrying out instructions from a higher manager; and who may or may not be being backed by their employer. Conference further believes that awareness of this clause is low.

Conference resolves to:

- 1) Instruct branches to share with all new members the provisions of "Member Representation: A UNISON guide", so that members are aware of the circumstances in which they may receive representation and those in which they may not;
- 2) Review the guide to ensure it is fit for purpose, taking feedback from branches, including amendments to the guide to afford better representation for members;
- 3) Report back to National Delegate Conference 2021.

***University of Bedfordshire***

### **UNISON Complaints Procedure**

Conference notes that the UNISON Complaints Procedure allows for three levels of problem solving.

Conference notes that the first stage of the procedure, informal problem solving, does not give any timescales for resolution, nor to whom in the branch complaints should be made, or alternatives if the complaint needs to be made about the person to whom a member would normally be expected to complain. Conference further notes that there is no written guidance available to branches in terms of how they should handle a stage 1 complaint, nor in formulating their own branch complaints policies.

Conference notes also that Stage 2, a formal complaint about a branch or a region, is made to the region. Conference believes that if a complaint needs to be made about a region, it cannot be that region which decides the outcome as that would be unfair.

Conference notes external policies such as the ACAS code of practise on disciplinary and grievance for employment matters where promptness, investigation, hearing and appeal are all important aspects.

Conference further notes that the UNISON Complaints procedure has not been updated since 2005.

Conference resolves to:

- 1) Develop written guidance for branches, including model branch complaints policy, and communicate this to branches;
- 2) Review the Complaints Procedure as a whole to ensure it is fit for purpose, taking feedback from branches and best practise from elsewhere, and amend as necessary;
- 3) Report back on both of these matters to National Delegate Conference 2021.

***University of Bedfordshire***

Conflicts with an Existing Rule

### **Increasing Participation**

In line with UNISON's Aims and Objectives section B 2.2 "to promote and establish a member-led union and to carry out and fulfil decisions made by members in a spirit of unity and accountability" the union should be encouraging the highest participation possible at all levels within the union whether that be local, regional or national.

Statistics show that despite our best efforts of encouraging voting, the National Executive Council and Service Group Executive elections produce an average of around five percent turnout. Clearly, more needs to be done.

In accordance with Schedule C point 4. Where the law allows, the National Executive Council may determine that an election shall be by either postal ballot and/or electronic ballot.

In order to support the increase in participation, Conference proposes that, where the law allows, all future regional and national elections will be by postal and/or electronic ballot. Conference also notes that members preferences could and should be taken into consideration.

***Knowsley***

### **Defend UNISON's Internal Democracy**

Conference notes with concern the decision taken by UNISON's National Executive Council on Thursday 6th December 2018, in relation to the procedures for the 2019 National Executive Council elections.

We note that prior to the 2018 Service Group Elections, the National Executive Council added the following wording, as paragraph 57 of the procedures for those elections:

"57. To ensure that UNISON remains an independent and representative trade union where all members have the right to fully and fairly participate, no nominee or candidate shall invite or accept any donation or contribution in money or kind from any outside organisation or company, including from any provider of goods or services to UNISON, any political party, or any employer in which UNISON organises."

On 6th December 2018, the National Executive Council added the following wording to the end of paragraph 57, to be applicable to the 2019 National Executive Council elections:

"For the avoidance of doubt, an 'outside organisation or company' includes but is not limited to, an organisation, club, association or other entity which consists wholly or partly of UNISON members and which is not provided for in UNISON rules. In determining whether or not something fits into this category, income, resources and formal structures would be considered. This is not an exhaustive list."

Rule D 2.1 of UNISON's Rule Book states that the NEC "shall not do anything that is inconsistent with these Rules or the policy of the Union as laid down by the National Delegate Conference".

Rule B 2.5 states that one of UNISON's Aims and Objectives is "to promote and safeguard the rights of members to have an adequate opportunity to participate in the initiation and development of policy making, through meetings, conferences, delegations or ballots, and to encourage the maximum democratic debate, together with the right to campaign to change policy, while at all times acting within the rules and agreed policy."

In 2001, National Delegates Conference passed Composite I, which stated, "Conference reaffirms its decision of 1998, confirming the right to organise, campaign and communicate to change, modify or replace policy through the constitutional channels of the Union, while acting within agreed Union policy."

Conference believes that the election of our National Executive Council is one of the most important constitutional channels through which UNISON members can ensure accountability within our union.

We therefore believe that the National Executive Council's attempt to restrict member participation in this process is not only contrary to UNISON's Rule Book and past Conference decisions, but also contrary to the existence of a healthy internal democracy within our union.

Conference believes that the National Executive Council's decision to allow for characterisation of a group consisting wholly of UNISON members, as an outside organisation that cannot actively participate in UNISON's National Executive Council elections, is an over-reach on the part of the National Executive Council.

We believe that the leadership of our union should seek to encourage debate; not to stifle dissent.

We believe that the existence of competing voices is healthy and we affirm the right of members to organise themselves to challenge existing leaderships at all levels of the union - from the leadership of their branches to the National Executive Council.

Conference therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to remove paragraph 57 from National Executive Council and Service Group Executive election guidelines.

***Salford City***

### **Accessing Immigration Advice and Representation**

Conference notes that currently immigration advice and representation is not part of the legal services offered to our members. Conference notes that our members can use our UNISON solicitors for non-work related services such as free wills, accidents at home for members and their family; and that they can rely on a dedicated team

when it comes to criminal matters, but the only immigration advice provided by UNISON centrally remains a phone consultation organised through an outside non-governmental organisation in London and available one day a week only.

Conference recognises that access to free immigration advice is virtually non-existent in Northern Ireland. There are also strict restrictions on who can provide this type of advice. Moreover, when employment issues are tied with immigration restrictions, it provides the perfect blueprint for exploitation and discrimination.

Conference notes that many employers, including Health Trusts in Northern Ireland increasingly recruit migrant workers from countries such as the Philippines and India and that our activists have been working hard to try and recruit them and include them within UNISON. However organising around immigration issues requires being able to follow through when someone needs support.

Council recognises that the experience of the Windrush generation should serve as a serious warning to us of how vulnerable our members can be to punitive and draconian immigration policies. Our members will increasingly need to access immigration advice and representation, particularly in the post EU-Exit environment when freedom of movement will come to an end and the 'hostile environment' will be extended to even greater numbers of migrant workers. Conference believes we must prepare now for the undoubted increase in members who will need advice and representation.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to review the current provision of legal services to our members in order to include access to immigration advice and representation.

***Craigavon***

In breach of the Agreement on the Political Fund

### **Make Votes Matter**

Conference notes:

- 1) That the UK is one of only three major developed countries to use a First Past the Post voting system for general elections;
- 2) The results of the 12 December General Election.

There is consensus among experts that First Past the Post has a strong right-wing bias wherever it is used, leading to parliaments and governments that are on average much further to the right than the voters.

This corresponds exactly with the UK's experience. Most votes went to parties to the left of the Conservatives in 19 of the last 20 general elections, yet the Tories have been in power for 63 per cent of this time. Instead of building a society "for the

many”, this has created one of the most unequal societies in the developed world, with some of the most restrictive trade union laws.

UNISON members need a majority Labour government to reshape society in the interests of workers and our communities. But it is imperative to realise that the current voting system offers no protection against later Conservative governments tearing up these hard-fought gains as they have in the past. The world’s most equal and progressive societies all use forms of Proportional Representation which prevent rule by a right-wing minority and lock in the hard-won victories of their Labour movements.

Conference therefore resolves:

- a) To adopt a policy of opposing First Past the Post and to support moves to explore, select and introduce a new voting system for the UK;
- b) To call via Labour Link for the Labour Party to do the same and to commit to including the voting system for general elections in the remit of its planned constitutional convention.

### ***South West Region***

#### **Make Votes Matter**

Conference notes:

- 1) That the UK is one of only three major developed countries to use a First Past the Post voting system for general elections;
- 2) The outcome of the 2019 General Election in which the Conservative Party obtained a huge majority with a minority of votes.

There is consensus among experts that First Past the Post has a strong right-wing bias wherever it is used, leading to parliaments and governments that are on average much further to the right than the voters.

This corresponds exactly with the UK’s experience. Most votes went to parties to the left of the Conservatives in 19 of the last 20 general elections, yet the Tories have been in power for 63 per cent of this time. Instead of building a society “for the many”, this has created one of the most unequal societies in the developed world, with some of the most restrictive trade union laws.

Conference believes; we need a majority Labour government to reshape society in the interests of workers and our communities. But it is imperative to realise that the current voting system offers no protection against later Conservative governments tearing up these hard-fought gains as they have in the past. The world’s most equal and progressive societies all use forms of Proportional Representation which prevent rule by a right-wing minority and lock in the hard-won victories of their Labour movements.

Conference therefore resolves:

- a) To adopt a policy of opposing First Past the Post and instead supporting moves to explore, select and introduce a new voting system for the UK;
- b) To call via Labour Link for the Labour Party to do the same and to commit to including the voting system for general elections in the remit of its planned constitutional convention.

### ***Plymouth in UNISON***

#### **A Fair Electoral System for All**

Conference notes that party politics has become increasingly divisive since the Brexit referendum. The current electoral system of First Past the Post is no longer fit for purpose. The current system allows a small group of voters, in marginal constituencies to dominate the outcome of General Elections and takes no account of the overall share of the popular vote.

Conference believes that First Past the Post does not truly reflect the democratic wishes of the electorate and it is time to review the current electoral system.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) To campaign and lobby the appropriate bodies in Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly, to review the First Past the Post Electoral System;
- 2) Engage with the Labour Party, through the Labour Link, to campaign and promote a review of current electoral system;
- 3) To work with the TUC and other unions to campaign and lobby the UK parliament to review the current electoral system and explore other electoral models.

### ***Welsh Joint Education Committee***

Could place the union in legal jeopardy

#### **Oppose antisemitism and support the rights of Palestinians**

Not printed.

### ***South Lanarkshire***

#### **Palestine**

Not printed.

### ***City of Wolverhampton***

#### **Climate Change**

Not printed.

### ***Wirral***

#### **Centralised Human Resources Support and Training for Branches Employing Staff**

Not printed.

**UNISON Essex**

**Moving Forward from the General Election**

Not printed.

**Salford City**

**Palestine and Anti-Semitism.**

Not printed.

**Medway Health**

In breach of Rule D 2.12 Employment of Staff

**Organise and Resist**

Conference recognises the threats posed by the majority Conservative government to UNISON members, public services and to the country as a whole following the outcome of the General Election on the 12 December 2019.

Living standards, pay, jobs, terms and conditions of service and pensions amongst other things will be subject to increasing attacks over the coming period.

In addition, workers' rights, health and safety legislation are likely to come under review as government seeks to implement draconian changes to the constitution meaning legislative changes can pass law without parliamentary scrutiny.

It cannot be ignored that this government is likely to attack the most vulnerable groups in our society including disabled people, women, migrants, refugees, LGBT+ people, young people, and the elderly.

Racism is likely to thrive with increases in islamophobia, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, caused by a hostile media and a right wing Conservative led majority government.

We must organise and resist all such attacks!

Finally, we must not forget that the Labour Party manifesto was and still is popular, with over ten million people across the UK voting for radical change. We must organise and resist any attempt to move away from this radical programme in the coming period through the Labour Link.

Conference therefore resolves to:

- 1) Conduct an immediate review of the impact of the Conservative manifesto, and in particular to:
  - a) Identify those parts the union most at risk of attack;

- b) Deploy resources within those vulnerable parts, including regional/national staff where required.

This review should be undertaken in consultation with all service Groups, regions, self organised groups and branches, and should draw up a Plan of Resistance including:

- i) Full support for campaigns to resist attacks including demonstrations, industrial action in accordance with UNISON's rules, and other forms of protest. (National demonstrations need to be organised around the country, and not just take place in London, in order to get our message across as widely as possible and to involve as many members as possible);
  - ii) Wherever appropriate, joint work with other trade unions for maximum solidarity.
- 2) Work with self organised groups to identify and resist attacks that disproportionately fall on Black members, women, LGBT+ and disabled members;
  - 3) Work with the Labour Link to resist movements away from a programme of radical political change that has inspired so many;
  - 4) Campaign, organise and resist privatisation of public services in any form particularly the NHS;
  - 5) Campaign and organise for adequate funding of all public services;
  - 6) Campaign for a properly funded real terms pay rise for UNISON members across all sectors;
  - 7) Resist attacks on trade unions and trade union members, representatives and officers;
  - 8) Explore the possibility of providing appropriate materials for UNISON members, to educate them on the issues they will be facing and how being part of a trade union offers the potential solution.

***Knowsley***

### **National Mental Health Officer, Regional and Branches**

As a branch we are passionate about mental health and after our 2019 suicide awareness training motion was passed with huge support from delegates, we have become increasingly aware of the real need for a better mental health advocacy structure within UNISON.

Mental health currently sits under the health and safety committee nationally which as a branch we feel is not an effective or appropriate place for it to be dealt with. We ask conference to consider a dedicated officer role within branch similar to other equality groups, officers at regional and national level who are able to champion and forward key issues that are affecting members with mental health difficulties and stress in order to promote more effective change. We are aware that we are not experts in this field but feel it is important to have a separate mental health role as we would be able to more effectively campaign for change within organisations from staff on the ground up to the managers and directors who need to be held accountable for policies and procedures that discriminate against members who

struggle with their mental health. We as a branch we experience so many of our members who are having problems with work place stress which is often not dealt with appropriately and would value a dedicated officer who can champion change in the organisations we work alongside.

During this time of austerity it is more important than ever to fight for equal support for mental health and against the chronic underfunding affecting mental health services. The UNISON Mental Health Matters project identified 60 percent of mental health services staff feel their mental health has been affected by their work and in the Struggling to Cope survey 38 percent reported working several hours of unpaid overtime on a weekly basis with well over half citing increased workload and cuts in staffing levels as reasons for why they are working these hours. UNISON has already prided itself on fighting to keep our members physically safe in their work place, we believe this group will build on this previous work supporting members but also challenging organisations to understand their duty of care to their staff in regards to mental health.

We are proposing that the National Executive Council and conference considers organisational change to empower our members by implementing the following positions:

- 1) National Mental Health Officer;
- 2) Regional Mental Health Officer;
- 3) Branch Mental Health Officer.

### ***Northamptonshire Health Workers***

#### **Resourcing the National NHS Supply Chain Branches Outside London.**

Conference notes that UNISON's branches are of key importance in the provisions of support for members and their responsibilities are ever increasing. The reduction of employers in national bargaining arrangements and the significant fragmentation of the workforce point to this trend.

There is clear evidence in this, at NHS Supply Chain with the contract being broken up to Procurement, Finance and Logistics employers to cover the next three to five years. Unipart were successful in the Logistics contract and UNISON's collective bargaining arrangements have been TUPE'd across for members covering the six depots in England.

NHSSC ranches' membership are small in number. The national committee is made up with the UNISON branch secretaries/chairs plus our national officer from the East Midlands region to meet with the employer on a bi-monthly meeting basis. The UNISON side also meet in between those bi-monthly dates.

During 2019/20 NHSSC UNISON branches have organised pensions roadshows and two national pay ballots for NHSSC members, however our national officer has no central allocated resources in organising these activities. The NHSSC UNISON

branches are grateful the national office agreed to pay for the second pay ballot, as one off this time.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council:

- 1) In consultation with the NHSSC UNISON branches and the appropriate regions to review, for the UNISON NHSSC national officer to be allocated resources to cover national activities. Recent examples being national pay ballots for NHSSC UNISON members;
- 2) This process to include meeting the union's objectives and the needs of members with particular reference to direct organisational support for branches. This to include the option of the NHSSC UNISON branches making contributions based on their member's numbers to have a substantial fund available for national activities across the NHSSC UNISON branches.

### ***NHS Logistics***

#### **Building the Union on Activism**

Conference agrees that strong, effective and sustainable trade union organisation is dependent upon a network of well-trained, motivated and engaged workplace stewards representing members and acting as union ambassadors.

It is no coincidence that workplaces with active stewards enjoy high union density, promote higher levels of membership participation in the union, deliver better outcomes at the bargaining table and win power for workers.

The challenges faced with building effective steward networks are complex, undoubtedly influenced by many external factors including austerity, anti-union laws, privatisation of public services, the breakdown of collective bargaining and fewer workers covered by union won workplace agreements.

Our sphere of influence contains many more employers than at any time in our union's history, services are more fragmented, automation and teleworking are driving new methods of work with workers increasingly situated in smaller teams or working alone.

Against this backdrop establishing the conditions necessary to build a network of workplace stewards is challenging and can only be achieved with a clear strategy supported by a detailed plan and the organisational commitment to provide the necessary resources to support such activity.

Conference embraces the ambitions to build a union founded on strong workplace democracy and union activism. But in so doing it recognises the changing world in which today's generation of activists live and work. No longer can a traditional model of classroom-based learning meet the training needs of all our stewards. Training must be delivered in venues and at times that meet the needs of stewards, with more availability of quality content on-line, delivered through blended learning.

Our learning offer must also remain strategically aligned with the objectives of the union focusing on membership growth through issue-based campaigns, building communities of workers, enhancing workplace democracy and securing collective agreements. This must include a clear commitment to develop political education in the union so that our ambassadors in the workplace have the skills and understanding to champion a political discourse based on securing power for workers.

Conference therefore agrees to call on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and prioritise a strategic plan to build on and enhance our existing network of workplace stewards;
- 2) Implement operational plans at each level of the Union with clear measurable outcomes and accountabilities to achieve a step change in the number of stewards across the union;
- 3) To hold a root and branch review of the current training and development programme with a view to developing a new offer that will meet the needs of all activists at each stage of their journey from member to activist;
- 4) Commit the necessary resources to develop a blended learning offer in recognition that access to time-off with pay to undertake training is not always possible and represents a major barrier to participation;
- 5) Review the role of the regional education lead to ensure regions have the right level of resource and individuals undertaking the role with the appropriate skills and support necessary to deliver and commission quality learning experiences for activists;
- 6) To consult regional convenors, self-organised groups and service groups in the development of points 1 to 5 above;
- 7) To report to NDC 2021 on the work undertaken and the outcomes secured as a result.

***Eastern Region***

### **Branch Support during Disciplinary Investigations**

Not printed

***Police Staff Scotland***

Not competent

### **No More Government of the Many by the Few**

Conference notes that the UK is one of only three major developed countries to use a First Past the Post voting system for general elections. There is consensus among experts that First Past the Post has a strong right wing bias wherever it is used, leading to parliaments and governments that are on average much more right wing than the voters. This corresponds exactly with the UK's experience. Most votes went to parties to the left of the Conservatives in 19 of the last 20 general elections, yet the Tories have been in power for 63 per cent of this time. Instead of building a

society “for the many”, this has created one of the most unequal societies in the developed world, with some of the most restrictive trade union laws.

Conference believes we need a government that supports UNISON’s values and priorities to reshape society in the interests of workers and our communities. But it is imperative to realise that the current voting system offers no protection against later Conservative governments tearing up these hard fought gains as they have in the past. The world’s most equal and progressive societies all use forms of Proportional Representation which prevent rule by a right-wing minority and lock in the hard-won victories of their Labour movements.

Conference recognises that forms of proportional representation are used in the devolved parliaments and that these have produced parliaments that are more representative of the electorate.

Conference therefore resolves:

- 1) To adopt a policy of opposing First Past the Post and instead supporting moves to explore, select and introduce a new voting system for Westminster elections;
- 2) To call on the National Executive Council to campaign for this policy within the wider trade union and labour movement.

#### Campaign for democracy

Conference notes with alarm the increasing incidences where the Tory government have shown that they do not support democracy in principle and in practice.

As trade unionists we know that Tory trade union legislation is anti-democratic when it restricts the right of workers to take industrial action and to elect its leaderships by modern methods to increase participation.

Their record of supporting undemocratic and sometimes despotic regimes across the world over many years shows their contempt for the principle of democracy.

Their control over councils shows their contempt for local democracy.

Their decision to prorogue parliament to limit their accountability to MPs showed contempt for parliamentary democracy.

Recent statements by Prime Minister Johnson and other Cabinet members that they would oppose a second referendum on Scottish independence even if there was a clear democratic mandate at the 2021 Scottish elections shows their contempt for the democratic will of the Scottish people and the right of nations to self determination.

All of the above demonstrates the undemocratic nature of the Tories and the risks to democracy that their continued role in government poses.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Highlight the threat to democracy posed by this Tory government;
- b) Raise within our membership the need for strengthening democracy at UK, devolved and local level including continuing to promote the importance of participation in elections;
- c) Challenge UK government foreign policy wherever it allies with undemocratic regimes;
- d) Continue to support the rights of nations to self-determination including Scotland.

### ***South Lanarkshire***

#### **UNISON – the union for low paid women**

Conference recognises that employers continue to under value the work of our low paid women members. No service can exist without the cleaners, caterers, clerical and care workers that are predominately women.

UNISON's structures try to ensure that low paid women are represented at all levels of the union. However, we recognise that organising in the sectors that are predominately low paid and female is challenging, that there remain barriers to low paid women's involvement and that more work is needed to involve more low paid women in the union.

Conference believes that the views of and active involvement of low paid women in developing our bargaining and campaigning priorities is essential to ensure they are relevant and that they inspire these members to get active and to increase recruitment.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council, with the national and regional Women's committees and service groups to:

- 1) Conduct a review of low paid women's involvement in the union;
- 2) Convene a seminar of all low paid women elected onto the National Executive Council and Service Group Executives to consider proposals for improving the involvement of low paid women and to review current bargaining priorities to ensure they are appropriate to this group of members;
- 3) Develop a strategy for increased recruitment, organising and campaigning around issues relevant to low paid women.

Conference further commends UNISON Scotland for recognising the value of using equalities to drive an organising agenda. In particular, UNISON Scotland continues to build on its successes, developing a bespoke disability training course with disability as the core focus to feed into and complement existing UNISON training. If successful, the next steps will be to incorporate it into the UNISON Scotland's training calendar and to explore a similar organising for equalities approach across all equality strands.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council working alongside the National Disabled Members Committee and other National Self-Organised Groups to:

- a) Develop and roll out the same, or similar, disability training nationally;
- b) Consider the benefits and merits of adopting a similar approach for each of the equalities strands to drive the Organising for Equalities Agenda; and develop and roll out similar training for each strand nationally.

### ***South Lanarkshire***

#### **Fact Checking in a Fake News Age**

The move away from print media has been gathering pace over several years now. So many people now get their information from online sources. Conference recognises that the growth in fake news has been a major factor in the outcome of recent elections. We need to fight back and dispel the myths and half-truths where we see them. Giving our members the facts not the fiction. UNISON is ideally placed to do so with our websites for our members. We need to give our members the knowledge to tackle fake news and the prejudices which arise from it.

Conference calls upon the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Develop and fund a work to create a page on our website as a UNISON Fact Checker. This will be a valuable resource for branches to use in communication with their members.

### ***Renfrewshire***

#### **Mental Health Services in England**

Conference deplores the continued underfunding and cuts to mental health services in England.

Over the last ten years of austerity this process has accelerated with the budget pressures forced on local authorities and the NHS.

In Sheffield mental health workers have fought back against these cuts and a disastrous reconfiguration of the service in 2017, which has led to an exodus of experienced staff due to work related stress which has resulted in record numbers of staff being off work.

On their return they find that huge waiting lists remain and many vulnerable service users and their families are still not getting the service they deserve which only adds to their own stress levels.

The members in Sheffield had a huge yes vote for strike action in a recent industrial action ballot and are demanding the reconfiguration is abandoned and a properly funded service put in its place.

Conference supports all mental health staff in their efforts to oppose these cuts across the country.

Conference calls on the Health Care Service Group Executive to demand that the government ensure mental health services are guaranteed ring fenced percentage funding from the NHS budget and a return to pre 2010 funding of local authorities in order to reverse what is a crisis in mental health care services.

***Sheffield Community Health***

Not sufficiently clear

### **Take Back Suicide**

At the UNISON National Delegates Conference 2019 conference requested conference to consider a short programme of training in suicide awareness, to be implemented nationally to empower our stewards with knowledge and the skills to identify and signpost members appropriately and effectively. Conference believed this training would support our stewards in signposting our members to seek the best advice which could be potentially life-saving. This would also enable our stewards when reviewing policies and procedures within their own working environments to enable them to access this against risk of suicide.

This motion was carried with great support, but unfortunately as far as we can ascertain no further action has been taken following this. We request that Conference consider supporting this motion again and commit to an effective strategy to role this training out for all our staff as a matter of urgency. There is lots of online learning available at nearly no cost and the Northamptonshire Healthcare Branch has offered national support in implementing this training. We need an effective strategy to role this training out for all our staff as a matter of urgency.

With the appointment by the government of a minister who is tasked with reducing suicide rates nationally, the need for all stewards to be trained in suicide awareness has never been clearer. Suicide is everyone's business and touches families whatever their class, age, gender or family situation. In 2018 nationally 6,213 people completed suicide and the highest suicide rate was among males between the ages of 45-49, though there has been an increase in males between the ages of 25-34 in 2018. We need to make sure all our stewards are aware of not only risk groups but how to signpost anyone they come into contact that might be having suicidal thoughts or at risk from suicide. We can empower our stewards to be able to support their members in accessing the correct support in a timely manner. We know from research that 3 out of 5 people have experienced mental health issues due to work, and workplace stress is associated with significantly increased suicide risk. As union representatives we will be dealing with many members who are experiencing pressure and stress caused by their working situation. Suicide is not inevitable, it is preventable. Early identification of suicidal thoughts and behaviour, and effective care for those at risk, are crucial in reducing the likelihood that an individual makes a suicide attempt or dies by suicide. We are not expecting our stewards to be experts, but we also know that they can be at the sharp end of members' distress and giving them the correct tools to work with is key for them to feel confident but also be able to support members effectively.

We would ask Conference to again support this motion.

***Northamptonshire Health Workers***

**Peer Support for all Stewards and Active UNISON Members**

As a branch we are very supportive of all our stewards and active UNISON members as we recognise in the changing landscape of the workplace and the continual underfunding we are faced with is bringing more challenges when representing and supporting our members. Often we deal with upsetting and difficult information that is shared with us when representing members. There is lack of research on the prevalence of mental health difficulties within active union members, however we know that those in these roles supporting others emotional wellbeing, are at higher risk of experiencing emotional distress themselves.

We would ask Conference to consider supporting setting up monthly drop in's (peer support) within branches where anyone who wants to discuss a case, the emotional impact it is has had on them or the worry it has left them with is able to share in a confidential non-judgemental environment. We need a well workforce and we know that peer support works as a way of encouraging us to talk but also share good practise. No-one needs to be an expert to offer support but it may also be an opportunity if a steward is struggling to make sure they are signposted appropriately to the correct support if their need is greater than what the peer support drop-in is able to deliver. We need to protect our valuable stewards and active members and make sure they have a safe space to discuss their needs so they can continue the important work they do feeling the branch has their best interests at heart. We ask conference to support the motion.

***Northamptonshire Health Workers***

**House of Lords**

To secure a politics to favour the many and not the few, we need an overhaul of Westminster's broken political system. From an unelected Lords to London dominated institutions, the UK's undemocratic constitution is stacked against working people.

Long lasting change is needed to ensure economic and social justice for the whole of the country and to ensure it lasts.

Labour and the vast majority of voters want to see Westminster's elite-dominated politics overhauled to work in the interests of working people and the trade unions who represent them.

Yet we have an unelected House of Lords that behaves more like a private members' club than the revising chamber we need.

If power continues to be hoarded by an unelected elite in Westminster, we cannot achieve social and economic change and advance the goals of trade unions and working people across all parts of the UK.

In the 200th anniversary year of the Peterloo massacre, marking the Chartists' proud fight for real democracy, we must carry on that unfinished struggle today.

Conference agrees that:

- 1) The House of Lords must be abolished and replaced with a fairly elected Senate of the Nations and Regions, to strengthen the voice of all parts of the United Kingdom and give us a revising chamber for the people;
- 2) A constitutional convention to look at wider reform of our state and politics to make it fit for the 21st century and to ensure that the people have a say in the way they are governed;
- 3) These must be done as a priority to ensure the gains of a progressive government can last.

***Wirral***

### **A Progressive Policy on Education and Training for our Health and Safety Representatives**

Conference notes that the recognised levels of Health and Safety education and training within this union has become stagnant and outdated. Traditionally, the only levels that have been recognised are levels 1,2 and 3, although Level 2 is now named "next steps". These levels have been the norm since around the turn of the millennium. Once Level 3 has been reached there is no formal educational training to progress to.

Conference, we are all aware of the value in our Health and Safety Reps. The legislative requirement for release, the chance to visit workplaces, interact with the members, and nearly as important as Health and Safety the chance to organise and recruit. Yet we are not investing in our Safety Reps. Education and training has become non existent within this fine union.

Conference how many Level 3 courses are currently being trained out to aspiring and enthusiastic Reps? Currently nil, and only two courses listed on the TUC website for this complete year.

How many Level 3 Reps have we within this great union? Answer, we don't know!

How many current Level 3 Reps would like higher graded training? Answer, again unknown.

Since the turn of the millennium, Health and Safety within the workplace has changed, it has not really developed. But different aspects and the shifting of responsibility to the member has changed. Such things as lean manufacturing, behavioural safety, Human factors, ISO 9001, 18001 and now 45001. None of which were included in the original syllabus for Levels 1,2 and 3. The expected culling of Health and Safety legislation now we are leaving the EU is a concern; a threat to Health and Safety of each and every member.

Therefore, Conference, we are calling for a proactive strategy and a progressive policy on investment in Health and Safety training and education, not just for now but also the future.

Conference, education has been the cornerstone of the trade union movement since its conception, why stop now!

Conference please support this motion.

1,2 and 3. Training in Health and Safety formerly ends at a Level 3 Diploma. The level 3 Diploma is recognised as the same as a NEBOSH General Certificate. The NEBOSH General Certificate is the entry level industry standard for Managerial Health and Safety advisors. This means our accreditation ends where managerial accreditation starts. In many cases experienced Health and Safety Reps are in roles directly opposite Managers of a NEBOSH Diploma grade which is level 6.

Our training has stood still in the past decade, and where education was and has always been a cornerstone of Trade Union values, Health and Safety training has become stagnant and sadly our standing within the Health and Safety community has lessened. The TUC has stopped individual applications for level 3 accreditation. They now only teach groups from a designated employer/Trade Union. More and more of our Reps are having to deal with Management auditing formats such as ISO 9001, 18001 and BSI 45001; with no formal training.

Conference, Health and Safety Reps are so important to this union and to its members. Management love using the format of Behavioural Safety; a way of passing their responsibility to the member. We have legal rights to time off to challenge management, to protect our members, and time to meet with them and organise in the workplace. Yet throughout the trade union movement the Health and Safety role has not been developed.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to initiate and develop formal training for Levels up to and including Level 6 for Health and Safety accreditation.

***NHSBT Anglia***

### **Sustainable and Ethical Procurement of UNISON goods and services**

Conference recognises there is an urgent to requirement to tackle the challenges of the climate crisis.

Conference notes that it is of major significant that our country delivers the target of net zero emissions at the earliest opportunity.

UNISON is collaborating with environmental groups and campaigners to lobby for a Just Transition which pursues an industrial strategy which promises green, sustainable employment and moves us towards the net zero target.

Conference agrees that UNISON has to fulfil obligations and set high standards of procurement in order to be seen as a credible advocate in leading the arguments for a move to net zero emissions.

Conference recommends that our union procure only goods and services from providers who can guarantee that.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

- 1) Establish a bespoke Sustainability Committee structure which considers the impact of UNISON procurement practices and develops acceptable thresholds;
- 2) Work with UNISON's procurement team to conduct a review of procured goods and services to guarantee providers can assure their supply chain meets high standards of both environmental sustainability and employment rights of their workers;
- 3) Where identified end the use of goods and services which fail to meet the thresholds of environmental sustainability and workers rights.

***Police Staff Scotland***

## **Rail**

Latest national rail passenger survey results show satisfaction is up overall but there is still a long way to go in places. Improvements are needed - more reliable trains, better value and more chance of a seat.

Growing pressures on capacity argue for a step change in the ability of the rail network to carry more passengers and operate more frequent trains. Whether it's the corridors from Rugby to Wolverhampton, Manchester to Stockport, Milton Keynes or Leeds to London we need to break free from our Victorian railway and create more space on the tracks.

Our infrastructure needs upgrading but this can be a massive inconvenience to passengers - and costs a huge amount of money. At a stroke the first leg of HS2 could add to the whole country's existing rail capacity. More freight trains running on tracks could even reduce congestion on motorways.

This is expected to cover the whole structure of the industry and include a shakeup of the over complicated and often unfair fares system.

Conference call on the National Executive Council to work with all relevant bodies to:

- 1) Influence what the plan will look like and get the most benefit from HS2;
- 2) Work with the relevant bodies to influence the design of phase 2;
- 3) Ensure there is no erosion of terms and conditions or a loss of jobs as a result of changes to the rail infrastructure.

***West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Transport***

Received past the deadline

**Rule Change**

*Kent*

**Information Pack for members considering retirement**

*Nottingham University*

**Making conferences, meetings and events more accessible**

*Scotland Region*

**Making conferences, meetings and events more accessible**

*East Dunbartonshire*

Received twice

**Protecting Employment Rights for Disabled Workers Post Brexit**

*South Lanarkshire*

**Protecting ethical veganism and other beliefs against discrimination**

*UNISON Power*

Requiring a rule change

**Retired Members' Involvement at Self Organised Group Conferences**

Retired members appreciate the National Executive Council rule amendment in 2014 which introduced their involvement at Self Organised Group (SOG) conferences as delegates with a right to speak but not vote. As a result retired members have had a presence at every SOG conference since then and feedback suggests that their input is both recognised and appreciated.

However, whilst this rule amendment gave retired members parity in terms of attendance and speaking rights with the SOGs and Young Members, one area where retired members do not have parity is the right to submit motions and amendments. Each SOG and the National Young Members' Forum (NYMF) can attend each other's conferences as appropriate and they can also submit motions and amendments to these conferences as specified in the national rules. But the rule change allowing retired members the right to attend and speak did not specify the right to submit motions and amendments which has resulted in retired members being discriminated against in this regard.

Conference believes that this omission needs to be addressed without delay and therefore instructs the National Executive Council to liaise with relevant groups with a view to submitting a further rule amendment to allow retired members the same rights as the NYMF and thus establish full parity.

*Leicestershire County*

## **Motion to Enable the Inclusion of Private Contractors Members onto the National Executive Council**

Conference notes that private contractors' members are at present not represented at all levels of the union.

Conference believes:

- 1) That the way forward to improve private contractor members' participation and membership is to incorporate private contractor members to the very heart of the union by co-opting a private contractor member on to the National Executive Council;
- 2) That the growth already seen in private contractors' membership is indicative of future needs and a source of growth for UNISON.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to:

- a) Initiate the necessary legal proceedings to enable a rule change to be made at the next conference, to enable a private contractor members' seat to be installed on UNISON's National Executive Council;
- b) To encourage all branches and regions to support and encourage private contractor members to stand for national office;
- c) Work with the Private Contractors' National Forum on other initiatives to increase the participation of private contractors members within the union.

***West Sussex***

### **Increasing the Young Members' Upper Age Limit**

Young people are under represented in UNISON. The legal age for young person's discrimination in the UK is 35 and under. The TUC definition of a young worker is under 30. Many young people start working in retail environments or entry level jobs and may not have had a chance to join a union, had the money, or time. When they do eventually join UNISON they may only have a year or so to get involved with the young members groups and events.

We call upon Conference to support our young workers by increasing the upper age limit in line with the TUC to under 30.

By not upping the age range, we are excluding a large amount of people, who otherwise may have been active within the union. To entice young, active members we need to up the age range to allow the young members to be more active and to recruit fellow peers.

***Bristol***

### **Retired Member Participation**

Retired Members, other than the small number delegated from the Regional Retired Members' Committees, are currently excluded from all of UNISON's conferences except the Retired Members' Conference. The Retired Members' Conference is only

allowed to debate and pass motions which solely or predominantly relate to retired or older peoples' issues. Retired Members, therefore, cannot have a direct input to debates on general citizenship issues or on rule changes which may in part or wholly affect Retired Members' activities.

In an organisation which strives towards equality and inclusion, this should not be allowed to continue. Conference therefore approves the following amendments to the UNISON Rulebook:

Section D, Clause 1.5 REPRESENTATION OF YOUNG MEMBERS – The title of the clause to be amended by the insertion of “AND RETIRED” after “YOUNG”.

The clause text to be amended by the insertion of “or Retired” after “young”.

Section D, Clause 2.14.3 to be amended by the insertion of “including retired member status” after “different occupations”.

***East Lothian***

### **Retired Member Discrimination**

In Section B of the UNISON Rule Book – Aim and Objectives, paragraph 2 states:

“To seek to ensure equality of treatment and fair representation for all members and to work for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexuality, gender identity, disability, age or creed.”

And as paragraph 3 states:

“To seek to protect the rights of all members to be treated with dignity and respect irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, gender identity, disability, age or creed.”

Retired Members, as members of UNISON, do not enjoy equality of treatment compared to other members. It is accepted by them that they should have no involvement in pay and terms and conditions issues. But the embargo on their involvement goes far beyond this to the extent that the only conference to which Retired Members can be delegated by their branch is the National Retired Members' Conference. This means that the only issues that they have the right under the Rule Book to debate and have motions on are those relating to older people. They are explicitly excluded from all other conferences.

Although, as members of UNISON, Retired Members are subject to the rules of the union, the same as any other member, unlike any other member, they cannot be delegated to attend the National Delegates' Conference, where those rules are made and modified. Also, they cannot be delegated to attend any of the self-organised groups' conferences. So when members leave the workplace, if they have previously identified as disabled, LGBT+, black, etc. they lose any meaningful connection with those groups as far as UNISON is concerned.

In 2020 when we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Equality Act, it is reprehensible that the biggest union in the UK which supposedly champions equality so flagrantly discriminates against a whole section of its membership.

Conference condemns this situation and instructs the National Executive Council to conduct a root and branch examination of the UNISON Rule Book and the union's procedures and policies and take action to remedy the situation before the 2021 National Delegates' Conference.

***East Lothian***

### **Motion to enable the Inclusion of Private Contractors Members onto the NEC**

Conference notes that Private Contractors' members are at present not represented at all levels of the union.

Conference believes:

- 1) The way forward to improve private contractor members' participation and membership is to incorporate private contractor members to the heart of the union by electing a private contractor member to the National Executive Council;
- 2) That the growth already seen in private contractors' membership is indicative of future needs and a source of growth for UNISON.

Conference therefore calls on the National Executive Council to;

- a) Bring forward the necessary amendment to rule in time for conference 2021 to enable a private contractors member's seat to be installed on UNISON's National Executive Council;
- b) To encourage all branches and regions to support and encourage private contractor members to stand for national office;
- c) Work with the private contractors national forum on other initiatives to increase the participation of private contractors members within the union.

***Four Seasons Huntercombe West Midlands***

### **Rule Amendments Ruled Out of Order**

Beyond remit of the Conference

### **Rule Amendment Schedule C Elections**

Schedule C 7

After "method of voting" insert ", in accordance with Schedule C.8,"

After "multi-transferable vote;" insert "by instant-run off vote;"

Insert a new Schedule C.8:

“8 Should there be three or more candidates the voting method must be one of proportionality (such as, but not limited to, single transferable vote or instant-runoff vote).”

***Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole***

Conflicts with an Existing Rule

### **Rule D The Right to Attend and Speak**

D 1.78

At the end of rule D 1.7.8 add:

"Each regional retired members' committee, having the right to be represented by only one retired member, may, in order to promote proportionality, fair representation or equal opportunities, appoint two retired members to share attendance between them. The respective region shall be responsible for any extra costs of this arrangement."

***City of Wolverhampton  
Leicestershire County***

### **Rule D Retired Members' Organisation**

Rule D 7.2

After "secretary" add: "(who shall be a General Branch Officer and a member of the branch committee)";

After "also elect" add: "such representatives to the branch committee as the branch may determine and".

Delete Rule D 7.5 and substitute:

"Retired members serving on a branch committee may vote on any issue or matter other than one which concerns the pay and conditions of work of members of the union in employment."

***City of Wolverhampton  
Leicestershire County***

Could place the union in legal jeopardy

### **Rule I Disciplinary Action**

Insert new 5.4:

"I 5.4 Where, as a result of allegations made against them, consideration is given to the suspension of a member, prior to that suspension, the member must be presented with appropriate details of the allegations concerned and must be given

the opportunity to challenge any intention to suspend. Consideration must be given to alternatives to suspension. Any resulting letter confirming suspension must outline the rationale for the suspension and why an alternative was not appropriate in the circumstances."

***Knowsley***

### **Rule I Disciplinary Action**

Insert new 5.4:

"I 5.4 Where, as a result of allegations made against them, consideration is given to the suspension of a member, prior to that suspension, the member must be presented with appropriate details of the allegations concerned and must be given the opportunity to challenge any intention to suspend. Consideration must be given to alternatives to suspension. Any resulting letter confirming suspension must outline the rationale for the suspension and why an alternative was not appropriate in the circumstances. Regular updates on any suspended members must be provided to the National Executive Council."

***Bolton Metropolitan  
Islington  
Salford City  
West Sussex***

### **Rule P Standing Orders for Conferences**

P 2.5

Insert new rule P 2.5:

"P 2.5 The Committee shall report to Conference the detailed reason why any motion, amendment or rule has been deemed out of order including, but not limited to, and if relevant, an explanation of how any such motion, amendment or rule would place the union in legal jeopardy or be incompatible with the rules of the union".

***Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole***

Not competent

### **Schedule A Rates of Subscription**

Background

Regional Council notes:

- The apprentice rate of £10 a year is a good scheme to encourage new workers in a place of work into the trade union movement
- In many instances, workers undertaking an apprenticeship is often their first step into the world of work, after leaving an educational establishment

- When a worker joins a union for the first time, it is rare that a member will move from one union to another
- Membership growth within UNISON needs to be constantly analysed to allow for continued growth
- The apprentice levy has recently been extended allowing more employers to claim financial benefits, for running apprenticeship schemes
- Levels for eligibility for the £10 per year are currently set by the Development and Organisation Committee for UNISON's apprentice scheme
- They are, If you are earning the minimum wage for apprentices or are in the following categories:
  - o Intermediate (England)
  - o Modern apprenticeship (Scotland)
  - o Foundation apprenticeship (Cymru/Wales)
  - o All other apprentices will pay the standard pay-related UNISON Subscription rates

This motion is to highlight the issue to all branches within the West Midlands region, and call for support in the region to raise a rule change to take to National Delegates Council in June 2020, with a view to gaining the required two thirds majority to make this change.

The rule change is proposing to increase the scope for the Apprentice rate to also cover:

- Higher apprenticeships
- Apprentices earning above the minimum wage
- Any individual undertaking a role with “apprentice” in their job title for a pre-defined time period (i.e. an apprenticeship “end date”)

#### Action

This calls upon the region to submit a rule change to National Delegates Conference 2020, reading as:

Insertion of new rule in Schedule A: rates of subscription, as per below, numbered 2.7

#### 2.7 Members on apprenticeships

Members shall pay £10 per year if they are earning the minimum wage for apprentices, or are in the following categories:

- o Intermediate or Higher (England)
- o Modern apprenticeship (Scotland)
- o Foundation apprenticeship (Cymru/Wales)
- o Are undertaking a role with “apprentice” in their job title for a pre-defined time period

## ***National Grid Energy***

### **Rule N Amendment of the Rules**

Proposed amendment is:

Rule D 1.7 National Delegate Conference – The Right to Attend and Speak

At the end of Rule D 1.7.8 add:

Each regional retired members’ committee, having the right to be represented by only one retired member, may, in order to promote proportionality, fair representation or equal opportunities, appoint two retired members to share attendance between them. The respective region shall be responsible for any extra costs of this arrangement.

The aim of this rule amendment is to give Regional Retired Members’ Committees the same right as branches to send sharers to National Delegate Conference.

Proposed amendment is:

Rule D 7 Retired Members’ Organisation

In Rule D 7.2:

After ‘secretary’ add ‘(who shall be a General Branch officer and a member of the branch committee)’; and,

After ‘also elect’ add ‘such representatives to the branch committee as the branch may determine and’.

Delete Rule D 7.5 and substitute:

Retired members serving on the branch committee may vote on any issue or matter other than one which concerns the pay and conditions of work of members of the union in employment.

The aim of this rule amendment is to bring Rule D7 into line with clearer formulations in Rule G that the Branch Retired Members’ Secretary is a Branch Officer and a member of the Branch Committee.

Proposed amendment is:

## Schedule B Members' Benefits

At the end of the first sentence of paragraph 2.2 of the schedule add:

and Schedule B para 2.7 and 2.8 providing the accident or fatal accident happens whilst upon union business.

The aim of this rule amendment is to entitle Retired Members to UNISON Accident Benefit and Fatal Accident Benefit where an accident occurs whilst the member is upon UNISON business.

***George Eliot Hospital***

Not sufficiently clear

## **Rule D Retired Members' Organisation**

D 7.8

Add new sentence:

"The National Retired Members' Organisation, in consultation with relevant Retired Members and subject to the Union's rules, may send up to two motions and up to two amendments to motions to each of the Self Organised Group Conferences, providing such motions or amendments do not concern the terms and conditions of members in employment."

***Leicestershire County***

## **Schedule A Rates of Subscription**

Insert new rule in Schedule A: rates of subscription:

"2.7 Members on apprenticeships

Members shall pay £10 per year if they are earning the minimum wage for apprentices, or are in the following categories:

- Intermediate or Higher (England)
- Modern apprenticeship (Scotland)
- Foundation apprenticeship (Cymru/Wales)
- Are undertaking a role with "apprentice" in their job title for a pre-defined time period."

***National Grid Energy***

## **Rule Q Definitions**

Reserved Low Pay Seats

Change all references from “her” to “their”.

After “her job.” insert new sentence: “In circumstances where branches only have employees in receipt of pay above the low pay rate, the seat may be filled by women members on the lowest grade of the salary scale.”

***Police Staff Scotland***

**Rule B At Work and in the Community**

B 1.1

After “employed”, insert “self-employed or working as casual workers,”;

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule C Scope of Representation**

C1.1

After “employed” add “self-employed or work as casual workers”

C1.2

Delete “those employed” and insert “those who are employed, self-employed or work as casual workers”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule C Categories of Membership**

C 2.1

Delete “person employed” and insert “person who is employed, self-employed or works as a casual worker”

C 2.3.2

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

C 2.3.2.1

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

C 2.3.2.2

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

C 2.5.1

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

C 2.6.2

Delete all instances of “employment” and insert “work” in their place

***Birmingham University***

**Rule D Composition**

D 1.3.1

Delete “are employed by a” and insert “work for”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule D Service Groups**

D 3.1.4

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule D Retired Members' Organisation**

D 7.5

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

D 7.6

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

D 7.7

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

D 7.9

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule F Regional Council**

F 4.3.3

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule G The Branch Committee**

G 2.2.6

Delete “employed” and insert “based”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule K Legal Assistance**

K 1.1

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

K 1.4

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

***Birmingham University***

**Rule Q Definitions**

Income from employment

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

Public Services

Delete “those employments” and insert “that work”

Work Group

Delete “are employed in” and insert “work within”

***Birmingham University***

**Schedule B Members Benefits**

2.7.4

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

2.8.4

Delete “employment” and insert “work”

***Birmingham University***

Received twice

**Rule I Disciplinary Action**

***West Sussex***